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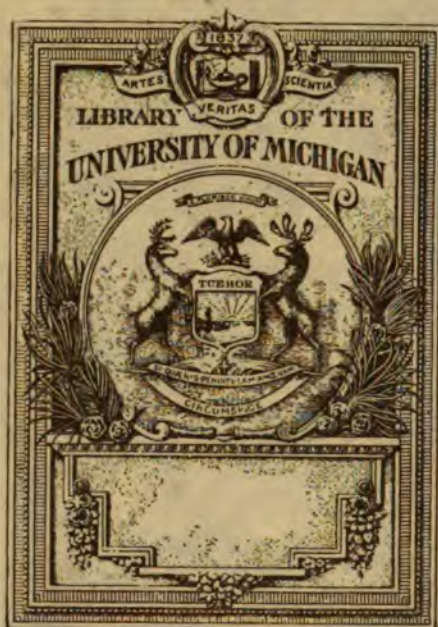
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# THE KING

*A Romance of the  
Camp and Court of  
Alexander the Great*

MARSHALL MONROE KIRKMAN

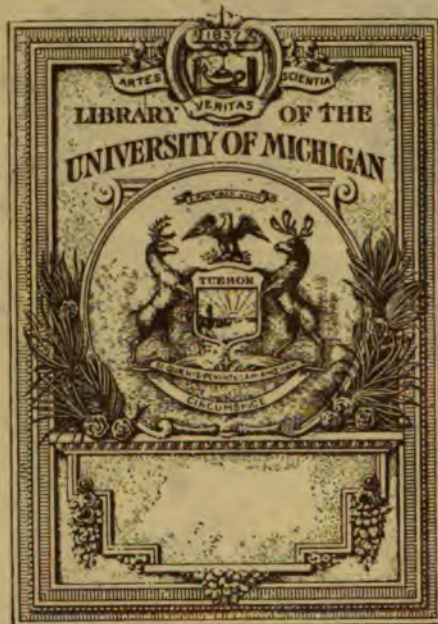




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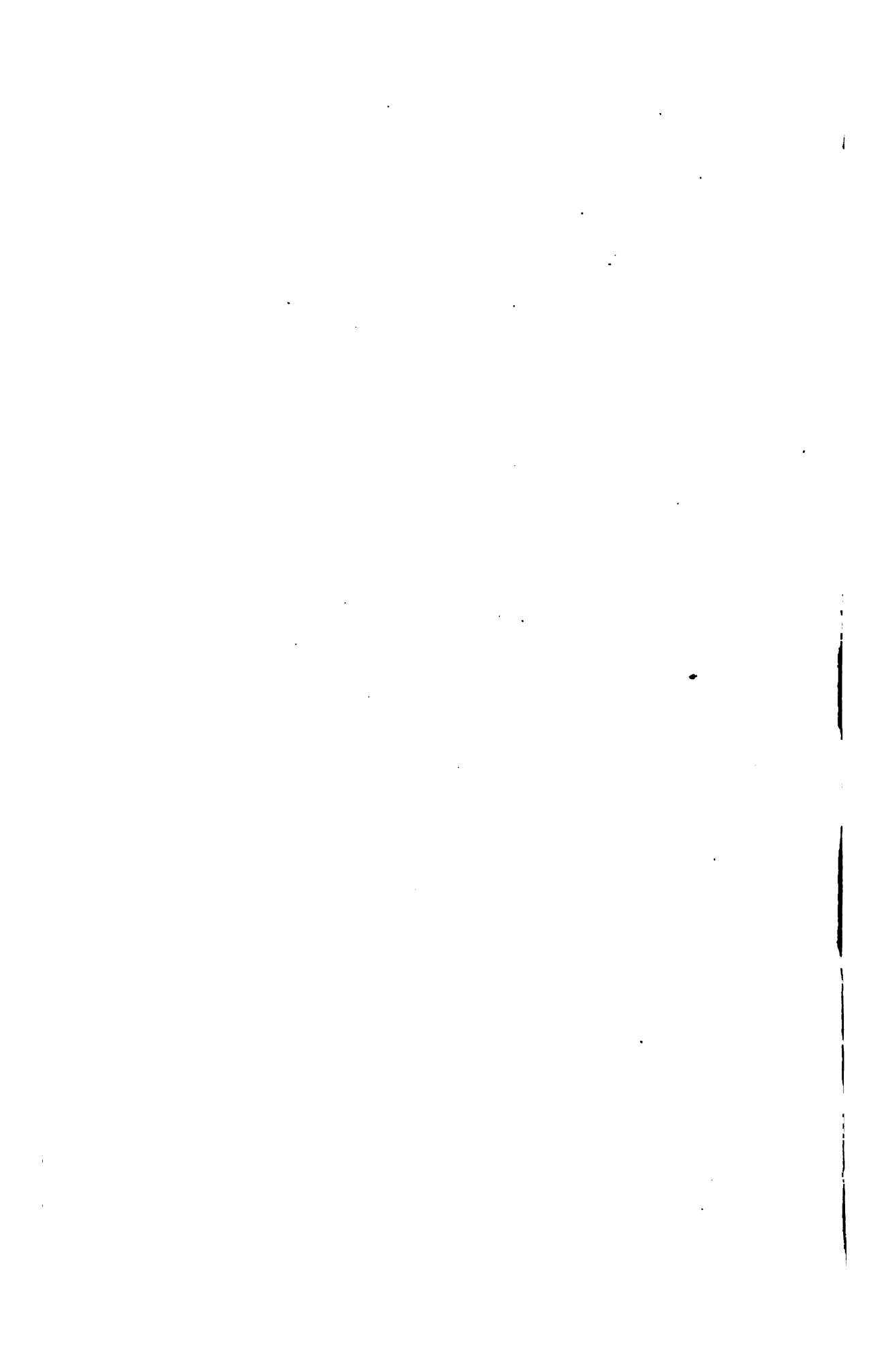
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WINNING OVER A SULLEN AND SUSPICIOUS ARMY

See page 24



# THE KING

*A Romance of the Camp and Court of  
Alexander the Great*

The Story of Theba, the Macedonian Captive

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By

MARSHALL MONROE KIRKMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY  
AUGUST PETR TYL

"Of all the great men and adorable women of the past, not one is really known and loved save those whom the poet or novelist has been at pains to portray amid the surroundings in which they lived and died."



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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

A small edition of this Romance was published in 1909 and received by the public with favour. A second edition, however, was withheld, at the request of the author, in order that he might separate the romantic from the strictly historical portion ; embodying the latter in a volume apart, embracing a history of the Personality and Deeds of the Great Ruler and Conqueror. This revision—the rewriting of the Romance and the issuance of the History of Alexander the Great—has now been completed and is respectfully submitted to the favour of the public.

In rewriting and re-editing the novel, the author has, moreover, availed himself of the opportunity, so rarely afforded writers, of further perfecting his great work.

The period in which the history and romance lie was the golden age of Greece—of statesmen, soldiers, orators, philosophers, teachers and incomparable poets and artists; it was also the warlike age of Alexander the Great—of adorable women, and adventurous and gallant men abroad in the world intent upon the achievement of immortal deeds! With all of these the romance has to do, the characters that enliven its pages being in the main well-known to students of history.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE.
I. LONG LIVE THE KING.....	1
II. AN ACT OF MERCY.....	7
III. AMYNTAS' TRAGIC END.....	17
IV. THE THEBAN MAID.....	27
V. A MESSENGER OF THE GODS.....	41
VI. THE AMBUSCADE.....	53
VII. THE DUNGEONS OF THE ANCIENT CITADEL..	61
VIII. THE ABANDONED QUEEN.....	71
IX. NEWS FROM WITHOUT.....	81
X. THE ABDUCTION.....	91
XI. GUARDING THE PRINCE CERANUS.....	103
XII. LYNCESTES SEEKS THE AID OF OLYMPIAS..	119
XIII. IN THE KING'S NAME.....	129
XIV. THE MEETING IN THE KING'S GARDEN..	145
XV. THE APPEAL TO ALEXANDER.....	155
XVI. THEBA'S LOVE.....	163
XVII. THE TRAGEDY.....	173
XVIII. THEBA RETURNS TO THE WORLD.....	187
XIX. THEBA DISCLOSES HER PARENTAGE.....	203
XX. THE KING'S NEW PAGE.....	215
XXI. HAPPENINGS OF THE NIGHT.....	229
XXII. THE MOUNTAIN SHEPHERD.....	243



## *TABLE OF CONTENTS*

CHAP.	PAGE
XXIII. CLEOPATRA'S DEATH.....	263
XXIV. THEBA RESCUES DEMETRIUS.....	275
XXV. BEFORE THE WALLS OF PELION.....	295
XXVI. THEBA JOINS IN THE SEARCH FOR EURYDICE.	311
XXVII. THEBA ENTERS THE BELEAGUERED CITY..	321
XXVIII. THEBA'S AWAKENING.....	335

## ILLUSTRATIONS

WINNING OVER A SULLEN AND SUSPICIOUS ARMY.....			
		FRONTISPICE	
PELLA.....	OPPOSITE PAGE		42
THE SURPRISE.....	"	"	54
THE FATE OF PAUSANIAS.....	"	"	94
IN THE KING'S GARDEN.....	"	"	146
FROM THE DEPTHS.....	"	"	166
MEETING OF THE QUEENS.....	"	"	176
BEFORE THE KING.....	"	"	250
ALEXANDER SEEKS DIOGENES.....	"	"	268
THE GALIC KING THREATENS LYSIMA- CHUS .....	"	"	286
FORCING THE PASS AT PELION.....	"	"	306
THE RESCUE.....	"	"	332
THE CONSUMMATION.....	"	"	346





## CHAPTER I

### LONG LIVE THE KING.

**"LONG live Alexander, King of Macedon!"**

It was a halting cry, one of doubt and fear, not a shout of exultation such as should proclaim a young and warlike Monarch. For the hour of Alexander the Great's accession to the throne was one of horror and dire confusion; and this not strangely, for his father, Philip, who had made the nation great, lay outstretched before the multitude, bathed in blood, stricken down by the assassin Pausanias. The vast assembly that filled the theatre where the tragedy occurred, looked on with bated breath and staring eyes, abashed and trembling; for no one can see a man die, even if it be his allotted hour, with tranquil unconcern, and it is ever a most grewsome and terrifying spectacle to see a strong man stricken down untimely; to look into his face as he receives the unexpected stroke;

to note his distorted features, the instantaneous pallor; the look of deep surprise, of shaken pride, of sudden hate, of growing fear. Thus the thousands, gathered from every quarter of the world to do Philip honour, watched as the assassin struck him down in the fullness of life and the hour of his greatest triumph.

The deed accomplished, the wretched murderer turned and fled, but the gods no longer favouring him, he tripped and fell and ere he could regain his feet, was put to death by the pursuing soldiers; but of this no one thought, all eyes were centred on the prostrate King and Alexander, who, weeping and distraught, knelt beside the body of his father. The moment was one of fear and wild distraction, the vast multitude that a moment before waited the King's approach with eager expectancy now looked on with blanched faces and smothered cries, expectant of they knew not what. Above the roofless building, as if in contrast, the sky, flecked with summer clouds, looked down in gentle calm on the excited throng, while on every side the verdant slopes and wooded heights of the majestic mountains that encompassed the ancient capital breathed an air of peace and quietude.

The royal guard, not knowing the nature or extent of the conspiracy, hurriedly formed a cordon of glistening spears about the fallen Monarch and the young Prince, for some there were who openly



exulted over the King's death; and conspicuous above all others was Philip's discarded Queen, Olympias, who had planned the murder and steeled the arm of the assassin. She stood apart, calm and vengeful, looking down on the dying King, and so she had stood as he approached the theatre amid the wild acclaim of the multitude. Noting every detail, she waited some way from the steps of the throne as the warlike Monarch came on clad throughout in white, unarmed, his head encircled with a wreath. As she watched his near approach to the great building she saw him raise his arm and wave back the protecting guard, that his person might be more clearly seen by the expectant multitude. At this unexpected and vain act she gave a cry of savage joy, and turning, fixed her eyes with fiery intentness on the waiting assassin, who stood motionless behind the protecting entrance. As Philip passed and Pausanias made no move, she signalled him with uplifted hand, crying out, "Strike, craven! Why do you wait?" At which the assassin, his face bathed with sweat, sprang forward, and drawing his Gallic sword, plunged it to the hilt in the body of the unsuspecting King. Seeing Philip fall, Olympias screamed aloud in savage exultation, so that those who heard drew away in horror and dismay. The deed accomplished, she stood watching with vengeful countenance, as the soldiers gathered about the fallen

King, listening to his half-articulate words. But presently when he had ceased to breathe, and the confusion and alarm became each moment more pronounced, she stamped her foot, and hastening to Antipater, Philip's civil governour, who stood apart, his face wet with tears, screamed in a frenzy of apprehension:

"Fool! Dolt! The beast being dead, why do you not proclaim Alexander King ere another claims the crown?"

Recalled to himself, and remembering the peril and uncertainty of the hour, the governour grasped the royal standard, and mounting the steps of the throne, proclaimed with choked voice, as he held the emblem aloft:

"Long live Alexander, King of Macedon!"

At first those who heard paid little heed, having eyes and thoughts only for the stricken Monarch, and so made but feeble response. Noticing this, and mistaking its import, the friends of the Prince Amyntas, who had as a child been deposed of the crown by Philip, gathered about him and responded with the counter-cry:

"Long live Amyntas, the rightful King!"

Then a most startling and unlooked for thing occurred, for from without the gaping through a gentle maid, with face of Grecian mould, thrust her way to the front, her dark and lustrous eyes crazed with fear and deep disquietude. Clothed in

Theban garb, those who looked with wonder and surprise, saw about her graceful neck the hated badge of slavery, true in every detail save that it was of figured gold instead of iron. Approaching within the circle gathered about the fallen King, she threw herself upon her knees beside the Prince, and catching hold of his cloak raised it to her lips, crying in tones that every one could hear:

"No! No! Not Amyntas, but Alexander, the rightful heir—he only is King!" and this with voice and gesture, as if she were the equal in rank and station of the most exalted present. Ceasing, she stared about her bewildered, as if not knowing where she was, but presently becoming conscious of her act and the presence of the staring assemblage, she gave a frightened cry and fell forward in a faint, her golden hair showing in the sun like splashes of blood on the marble floor.

Stirred to the heart by what they saw and heard, the guard, abandoning the prostrate Monarch, raised their weapons aloft with exultant gesture, shouting:

"Alexander! Alexander! Long live Alexander, King of Macedon!"

At this the multitude, before quiescent, stirred to life, filled the vast structure with a roar of fierce approval, and the throng without, heeding it, took up the cry, so that all other sounds were instantly hushed in the wild acclaim. Disconcerted and unmanned by the demonstration, which was one of

menace as well as exultation, Amyntas' friends ceased their cries, and those who had been parties to the plot to murder Philip fled in hot haste, all save Lyncestes, one of the chief conspirators. He, abandoning those with whom he had been associated to their fate, ran to Alexander's side, and kneeling, kissed his hand, exclaiming: "Long live Alexander, King!" Afterward joining the guards of the King, he helped to arm the Prince, and this with such show of loyalty and affection that every one remarked the timely favour.

While what we have related was transpiring, Antipater, sorrowing and undone, pushed his way to the body of the fallen Monarch, and placing it upon a litter, commanded the officers of the guard to bear it to the regal palace. In this way and in silence it was borne through the crowded streets, attended by Alexander and followed by the vast multitude that filled the city. Reaching the palace, the governour lost no time in surrounding it with a cordon of troops, placing trusted guards at each of the entrances to the vast structure. When these preliminaries had been completed, the Herald of the Court, surrounded by the officers and attendants of the late King in their robes of state, advanced to the entrance of the palace, where he three times solemnly proclaimed Alexander King, each announcement being hailed with responsive cries by the multitude that filled the courtyard of the palace and adjacent streets.

## CHAPTER II

### AN ACT OF MERCY

WHEN Alexander had been proclaimed King, as described in the preceding chapter, he proceeded to the Temple of Zeus, attended by sacred priests, robed in white, his brow encircled by a wreath, where he offered fitting sacrifices and libations in dutiful honour to the manes of his father, in anticipation of the more stately ceremonies to follow at a later day. Afterward, and in response to the tumultuous cries of the excited throng, the young King appeared at the entrance of the palace, where he publicly thanked the citizens for their expressions of loyalty and affection.

Satisfied of the fealty of the people, he determined to lose no time in visiting the army marshalled on the plain beyond the city in anticipation of any event following Philip's death, that might call for its interference. Of its loyalty the young King had no doubt notwithstanding the rumours that filled the air of divisions among its members, some claiming it favoured Amyntas, the deposed prince, others the young prince, Ceranus, many avowing it to be unfriendly to Alexander, believing him in some way accessory to Philip's murder. Aroused by these rumours, and the persistency with



which they were repeated, Alexander mounted his war-horse, Bucephalus, and set out, unarmed, determined to ascertain the disposition of the troops, which from his long association with them, he believed to be friendly to his cause. Accompanying him as an escort of honour and affection, were a body of the Companions, men of princely and noble lineage, clad throughout in armour and armed with buckler, spear and sword, similar in all respects to the knights of the Middle Ages with whom they have been aptly compared. In the prime of life, of accomplished manners and unconquerable courage, they were in truth fit companions of the Macedonian Kings. At sight of Alexander as he issued from the great gate of the royal palace, amid the blare of trumpets, the clash of armour and neighing of horses, the overwrought multitude, forgetful of the tragedy of Philip's death, hailed the young Monarch with such strength of lung and fervency of heart that his eyes filled with tears of love and gratitude. Removing his helmet, his long flaxen hair falling about his face, which still bore traces of the shock and horror of the morning, gave to his high and noble features a look of indescribable majesty and grace as he responded to the salutations of the people.

In the midst of his progress through the crowded streets an old man, clad in shepherd's garb, threw himself before the King's horse, and holding up

his hands, craved a favour. Annoyed and angered, his thoughts busy with what had transpired and the uncertainty of the hour—nay, of the good intention of many who crowded forward seemingly in welcome—the young King nevertheless remembering that he was now the father and guardian of his people, drew rein, and smiling upon the suppliant, motioned him to prefer his request.

"Pardon, oh King! Pardon! Pardon!" the suppliant cried out in the rude patois of his mountain tribe, falling upon his knees.

Responding with like speech, the King bade him make known his prayer.

"The life of my son—under sentence of death," he sobbed, dipping his forehead in the dust.

"For what offence?" the King asked, with gentle voice.

"An act of treason," he answered, prostrating himself anew as he saw the brow of the King darken at his words.

"Against whom?" Alexander asked, the multitude standing mute as if stricken with death.

"Thyself, oh King—and most foolishly; but the boy's words coming to the ears of Antipater, he has been arrested and condemned to death."

"And most properly, oh King," Lyncestes interrupted, pushing forward, eager to display his new-born loyalty. "The sweet air of our mountains, poisoned with the breath of traitors, needs the

lightning stroke of death to cleanse it of the foul taint, lest another fall like Philip."

"The poor lad was deep in drink, and knew not what he said," the old man protested, "for he bears thee no malice, oh King, as I well know, having served thy father faithfully in the ranks these many years," he concluded, his gaze fixed with supplicating eagerness upon Alexander.

"Grieve no longer, old man, for such babblings have no meaning and were the better left unnoticed," the King consoled, after a moment's pause. "I might not this day forgive such words uttered against another, but directed against myself I may act without offence. Rise and give thanks to the gods," he went on, with smiling countenance, "that your prayer prompts me to a duty I had forgotten that well befits this hour of blood and dire reprisals," and turning to his secretary, he commanded: "See to it, Eumenes, that the accused is at once set free; and that the black events of this murderous day may not go forth to the world unsavoured by some act of sovereign grace, prepare an edict in the King's name, granting pardon to all who have offended save such as are contrivers or abettors in my father's murder." Then turning anew to the old man with meaning speech, he said, "Go thy way in peace, and bid those you love mix not politics with their wine, lest another time the King be not near or in the mood to pardon."

Overcome by the favour shown him, and weak from the infirmities of age, the old man lay still, prostrate and trembling, before the King's horse. Seeing this, the Theban maid, whom we saw hail Alexander as King in the moment of uncertainty and peril, darted from the crowd, and putting her arms about the old man, helped him to his feet. Supporting him with encouraging speech, he besought her to lead him to the King, and this she did, her face aflame with blushes. Reaching Alexander's side, the aged shepherd clasped the King's knee; bedewing it with falling tears; but what was remarkable to those who watched, the young maid, making pretence of supporting her aged companion, pressed her lips again and again with furtive passion to the silver garniture of the Monarch's horse. Commenting upon it, many who watched thought the act coming from a Theban slave, captive of the State, arose from excess of sympathy for the bereaved shepherd. But those prudishly inclined openly declaimed against so forward an act, and with one accord fell to inveighing against the degeneracy of the times and the boldness of all bondmaids, praying aloud to the gods that the young King might have greater strength than Philip to withstand the wiles of Theban slaves and other shameless wantons. But of all this the gentle maid heard not a word, or hearing seemed not to hear.

Unconscious of what occurred or the comments of the multitude, the King proceeded on his way, animated and exalted that his first act should be one of sovereign mercy. Then it was amid the wild huzzas of the multitude, who watched and listened, that the ambitious Prince, whom glory encompassed as with a mantle, felt the power and pathos of the kingly office; what it was to be a patriarchal King; to be set apart to be the protector and judge of men. His mind thus occupied, he went his way, no longer conscious of the cries of the people that filled the air anew as knowledge of what he had done was conveyed from mouth to mouth.

"Surely, a day so sad and yet so glorious was never known before," Hephestion, a young officer of the Companions and the intimate friend of Alexander, exclaimed.

"Eye of Cyclops, no!" Clearchus, a Companion ever ready with speech and sword, gloated, eying the crowd complacently. "It will be one for men to long remember: Philip making triumphant progress through his capital; Philip murdered; and now with scarce an hour's interval the old King quite forgotten, his son proclaimed, following the self-same path that Philip trod, and amid like welcoming cries."

"The people give the young King royal welcome, and all the world is here to witness it," Perdicas, a

trusted officer, exclaimed, surveying the throng that filled the streets and housetops, and, room being denied, found place of vantage on the sides of the mountain that loomed about the ancient capital.

"It cannot be but a reign so heartily welcomed must prove a happy one," Hephestion resumed, as if to assure himself that the manner of Alexander's accession boded the young King no ill.

"Flame of fire, yes, and one in which 'tis good to be alive; a reign of wars and surprisements and the sack of Persian treasures," Clearchus foretold, looking about him.

"And see, he salutes the multitude as if he had always reigned; and do you remember it was as King that Philip hailed him on the battle-field of Cheronea when he clasped him in his arms," Near-chus, a Companion, cried exultantly.

"But will not the envious and ill-natured say that he lacks in respect to his father's memory in thus hastening his recognition as King?" Hephestion questioned, as if fearing Alexander's action might be commented upon unkindly.

"Eye of Cyclops, no! When traitors are abroad and a throne's the prize, men do not wait on ceremony. Nor is it well even in peaceful times, as our history proves, to let the crown of a dead king lie idle ere the rightful owner claps it on his head."

"'Tis not the throne of Macedonia only, that is at stake today," Perdicas mused.

"No, 'tis the domination of the world," another boasted.

"Yes, and both lie in the keeping of yonder army," Perdicas added, nodding his head in the direction of the valley beyond the city where the troops were quartered, and toward which Alexander was with difficulty making his way.

"And the King in thus hastening his recognition forecasts by so wise and prompt an act what he will do once the throne is his."

"He needs be prompt, for see yonder fiery signals already convey to enemies abroad the news of Philip's death," Clearchus cried with a scowl, pointing to the mountain heights above the city, from which columns of smoke were slowly ascending, conveying quick intelligence to surrounding nations of what had taken place.

"Nor are the telltale fires the work of our savage visitors alone," Nearchus raged, referring to the representatives of barbarous tribes present in the city as the guests of Philip.

"No, Demosthenes has long since had in like manner, news of Philip's fall, and quick to serve our enemies, has conveyed intelligence thereof to his patron, the Persian King," Perdicas angrily commented.

"'Twill be sweet news to him!"

"Yes, and others like him who have long feared Philip's power," Hephestion mourned.

"Think you they will gain by the exchange?" some one asked, with a cynical laugh.

"No! God of gods, no! Persia has more to fear from Alexander than a dozen Philips, crippled with wounds and distraught with the intrigues and clamourings of his many wives," Clearchus cried, as if seeing therein compensation for Macedonia's present great loss.





## CHAPTER III

### AMYNTAS' TRAGIC END

"EYE of Cyclops, what have we here?" Clearchus cried out, as he reined in his horse, attracted by the tumultuous cries of the throng that filled a narrow street the Companions were that moment passing.

"Gods of Olympus, 'tis the sovereign Prince Amyntas pursued by the officers of Antipater!" Hephestion responded, angered at the spectacle.

"And well it is so if half that's told of him concerning Philip's death be true," the other muttered.

"But the piteousness of it, Clearchus—a Prince of royal blood to be thus hunted before the world!" Hephestion grieved.

"Yes, better the old way, to strike them when asleep, or in some quiet corner where the world's eye does not reach and its protruding ears may be filled at leisure with specious tales of the ails that took them off," Clearchus dryly responded. "Surely, we have fallen on vulgar days, when princes are put to death thus openly," he laughed.

"'Tis not that, Clearchus, but Amyntas is so young and hath such great pretensions to the throne that treason seems to find excuse in him."

"Fie on your soft heart! Death is ever the fate of those who have only pretensions to a throne! Why, you have not fingers and toes, Hephestion, on which to count the Macedonian princes who have met untimely deaths in vain attempts to climb the bloody steps or hold their feet once the height had been attained. And now comes Amyntas, young and comely, to make the venture, and failing, goes to join the bloody throng."

'And as he falls, Alexander, not less aspiring, forgetful of the past and risking all, rides forth afield, void of buckler or spear, to try if he may grasp what others had and could not hold," Hephestion murmured, a note of fear in his voice.

"And being in the right, may the gods favour the effort," Perdikkas prayed.

"Never fear; nor will one throne content him unless indeed it far o'ertops all others," Nearchus confidently added.

"What further news have you of today's happenings, Clearchus?" Hephestion asked, referring to the conspiracy of Pausanias.

"'Tis said a score of those involved have already paid the debt, not one being spared. A busy day, and much to the liking of Antipater, our iron-hearted governour," Clearchus answered complacently.

"He has no mercy for those who have offended."

"No, not more than a boar's tusk."

"Men need be strong in times like these, Clearchus," Hephestion excused in his mild way.

"Yes, and Antipater is as free from weaknesses as he is of human virtues," the other laughed, thinking of the austere governour's sober habits and avoidance of wine, of which Macedonians were thought to be overfond.

"Think you Alexander approves his acts?"

"Flame of fire, yes! Furious rage has followed the hour of horror, and 'tis his command that all implicated in the murder shall suffer death. But look, Hephestion, the officers who pursue Amyntas are followed by a troop of horse, making his capture sure!" Clearchus cried, pointing to the Prince, who was now hemmed in on every side.

"An hundred to one!"

"May treason be ever thus outnumbered!"

"But not without a contest will Amyntas yield!" Eumenes cried, elated. "See, he turns on his pursuers with uplifted sword, meeting them midway of the narrow field!"

"'Tis a sight for sore eyes, and for it I forgive the wretch his many crimes," Clearchus exclaimed. "But look, the people fall back; hating the Prince, they will not see him put to death without a chance to show the stuff he's made of!"

"'Twill avail him nothing, for the soldiers, insane with rage, rush on with protruding spears, while he has but his sword, and so will fall ere he can strike a blow," Hephestion grieved.

"No, brave men fight not thus unfairly, the gods be praised--for see, Seleucus and Ptolemy, who pursue the traitor, wave back the advancing troops, declining aid!" Clearchus shouted.

"Yes, and that it may not savour of murder, Seleucus himself withdraws, leaving Ptolemy to fight it out with Amyntas, man to man."

"Bravo, Seleucus, 'tis what one might expect of a Companion; but 'twill avail Amyntas nothing, for Ptolemy's the better man and has the better cause," Clearchus exclaimed, with envious warmth, having himself long sought a chance to fight the Prince because of the latter's splenetic temper, of which he had at one time been the helpless victim.

"See! They fall upon each other with the fury of demons, and the rabble, fired by the sight, cheer them on impartially, caring little so that the best man wins," Perdicas commented, as he watched the struggle between the two men.

"The blood of Kings should not be thus despoiled before the gaping crowd. I would Amyntas had died fighting for his country instead of falling thus ignobly," Hephestion said with sorrowing voice, as the Prince fell back before the savage onslaught of the other.

"Bravo, Ptolemy! See, he halts and backs away, that Amyntas may have sword room in the crowded space! Flame of fire, may no harm come to him because of the generous act!"

"Now they fall on again, and one can only see the flash, so swift is stroke on stroke," Perdiccas murmured.

"By the gods, 'tis a sight to warm the blood; but see, Amyntas again gives way, unable to withstand the fury of the other's charge."

"And to his doom," Clearchus cried as Ptolemy, lifting his horse, beat down the Prince's wavering defence and thrust him through the body. "A timely service done the State, comrade, and sparing us the hated office of a trial before the gaping crowd!" the old soldier went on presently, as Amyntas' body, swaying this way and that, fell headlong to the ground.

As the little group of officers thus commented on the tragic spectacle, Ptolemy threw himself from his horse, and kneeling, lifted up the dying man to receive in generous sympathy any message the stricken Prince might have to leave. Seeing this, Clearchus, excited by the act, called out:

"Well done, Ptolemy, may you have better fortune than Amyntas if perchance a vacant throne awaits an occupant, and you in courage seek preferment," he went on in idle comment, as if foreseeing, far off, the founding of Egypt's royal house and Ptolemy's part therein.

Unconscious of Amyntas' tragic death, Alexander, who rode some distance in advance, kept on his way amid the acclamations of the multitude,

who crowded close upon him as if they could not see enough of their beloved Prince. In this way he at last reached the valley that lay beyond the city, its broad expanse intersected by a broiling mountain stream that wound its way hither and thither throughout its length. On the further side and as far as the eye could reach, the war-worn tents of the soldiers covered the grass grown plain. But near at hand on the bank of the mountain stream, Philip's invincible army awaited Alexander's coming. In front, the Companions rested, clad in armour, their plumes waving in the gentle breeze. Behind them in solid column, there came the Phalanx, which, with the Companions, formed the array and strength of every battle. Near at hand and in honour were the Foot Guards of the King, while further off, troops of lighter arms mingled in picturesque confusion with the bowmen, slingers and darters of the army. As Alexander approached, the wild acclaim that had ever attended his coming was strangely absent, the salutations that met him seeming to belong to an officer rather than a king. Of heartiness or enthusiasm, there was none; rather an attitude of doubt: that of men long led to victory by one they trusted and loved, who had been suddenly stricken down but at whose instigation they knew not, a thousand rumours filling the air. Sorrowing, they welcomed Alexander with ashen faces and leaden eyes, seemingly forget-

ful of his services in the past and disregardful of his claims to the crown, thinking always of Philip and his death that had deprived them of both a father and a victorious leader. In all this the young King sympathized, but seeming not to notice their sullen attitude or changed demeanour, sorrowing and disturbed, he slowed his horse, and saluting the waiting troops, addressed them with halting speech, striving in vain to overcome his agitation and deep distress.

"Comrades! Macedonians! Philip, our beloved King is dead! He who led us to victory, who made our country great, has fallen, murdered by Pausanias, his trusted Captain of the Guard; and this because of a wrong done the assassin by Attalus, in which the King had no part! Thus a day happily begun, and of which so much was thought, is filled with sadness and despair. Comrades! you have lost a King; I, both a father and a King! Sorrowing, I mingle my tears with yours. But though the King is dead, the King remains. The past we cannot recall—the present is our own! Succeeding to a throne made great by Philip, I will follow his footsteps, the fortunes of the army being mine as they were his; and on this sword, worn by him but yesterday, I swear in pledge to maintain all he so bravely won!" he concluded, raising aloft the shining blade.



Hearing him, the faces of the soldiers softened, for they loved the young Prince, not alone as Philip's son, but as a companion in arms, the dangers and hardships of which he had shared with them. And of his leadership they had seen abundant proof at Cheronea, where the opposing army, believed invincible, had crumbled into dust before the charge of his victorious troops. Remembering this, the soldiers accepted his word and hailed him King, but sadly; and lacking the note of impulse, died away in a sob or sorrowing wail rather than a cry of exultation. Noticing the lack of heartiness, the brow of the King darkened, but otherwise he gave no sign save that of weariness, as if life's energies were exhausted by the horrors and unexpected happenings of the day. His hair, which commonly hung in ringlets about his neck and shoulders, lay limp and dishevelled, and his face, usually animated and full of colour, was drawn and of the pallour of a dead man. Seeing this, the multitude stood still expectant, as if Philip's death were somehow to be followed by a tragedy still more startling. While all watched and waited, scarce breathing, there suddenly emerged from out the crowd—and not by chance, as it had seemed before—the Theban maid, whom we have seen, busy with the tragic happenings of the day. Hastening to a group of soldiers and filling a horn with wine, she proffered it to the exhausted King,

and with such air of gentleness and modesty that all who watched were captivated by the kindly act. As he recognized the young maid and stooped to receive the proffered cup, she caught his hand, and pressing it to her lips, whispered as if to an equal:

"The soldiers, bewildered, grieve for their lost leader, not knowing what is before them. Drink to his glorious memory, oh King, to his deeds, to the army, to Persia's conquest!"

Awakened to new life, Alexander accepted the cup, and turning anew to the staring soldiers, cried with clarion voice:

"Comrades! I drink to the memory of the mighty dead! To the country he made great! To the army he organized and led to victory! To the conquest of Persia, which I promise you, where riches and undying fame shall be the reward of your services and loyal devotion to the State!" and raising the cup to his lips, he emptied it at a draught.

Captivated by the act of the young maid and the warlike ardour of the King, and, above all, by the promise of Persia's conquest, the soldiers crowded forward in uncontrollable mass, shouting with one voice, again and again:

"Long live Alexander, King of Macedon!"

In this way the army was won, and he whom we know as Alexander the Great became King. The appearance of the young Monarch, then in his twentieth year, was pleasurable in the extreme, all

the world being agreed as to the charm of his personality, and lion-like courage and skill at arms. Of imperious temper where his kingly purposes were denied, he was at other times the most complacent of princes, at once amiable, generous, and of trusting nature.

Such was the young Prince whose tragic accession to the throne of Macedonia we have witnessed.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE THEBAN MAID

LOOKING with love and fervent admiration on the King as he sat his horse amidst the acclaim of the army, Lysimachus, the early tutor of Alexander, now grown old and feeble, cried out with cracked voice, turning to a young officer by his side:

"Look, Medius! How glorious is the King! And 'tis I who taught him, as Achilles was taught by Phoenix."

"He is indeed glorious," Medius responded, with enthusiasm.

"And a lucky day for the country that replaces Philip, broken and distraught, with so great a Prince,—and one so well taught," he added, as if that were all-important.

Hearing him, the other clapped his hand over the mouth of the aged pedagogue, muttering in a voice far from amiable:

"Hush, old man, lest the soldiers, forgetful of your age, should drag you from your horse and tear you to pieces in their rage!"

"Tear me to pieces!" the other protested. "Alexander they love, but Philip they only honoured."

"Philip, dead, is enshrined in their hearts, and woe to him who aided the murderer or commends his doings!" the other cautioned.

Abashed, the old man grasped with shaking hand the sword that hung at his side, gazing about him with furtive eyes. But no one seeming to regard him seriously, he quickly sought a subject of conversation less dangerous to himself, going on irrelevantly, as if naught had occurred:

"Think you we will march within the week to the conquest of Persia, as the King promises, or will some further time be required?"

"If we march within the year it will be well, for that will be little enough for the work the King has in hand."

"Fie! Philip had everything in readiness; indeed, a part of our troops are already beyond the Hellespont," the old man blustered, turning impatiently upon the crowd that pressed upon him. Raising his whip in anger to beat them back, he espied the gentle maid who had tendered the cup of wine to the overwrought King, but who now, pressed against the old man's horse by the surging mass, could no way free herself. Seeing her upturned face, and his mood changing, Lysimachus cried with maudlin speech: "Hello, wench, nymph of the morn, do you press upon me that I may find excuse for kissing your pretty mouth?" and stooping over he sought to do as he had said, but, surprised and

angered, she responded by a sharp blow across his face:

"Shame upon you—the King could not be more forward!"

"What, know you not, my pretty, that 'tis Lysimachus, the King's tutor, who honours you? But go your way if you will," he scoffed, as she tore herself free, "and be not so ill-mannered another time;" and straightening himself in his saddle, he went on, addressing Medius as if nothing had occurred to disturb the thread of their discourse: "'Tis said that Parmenio, commander of the advance guard beyond the Hellespont, is about to lay siege to Sardis, the key to Western Asia, and this with the thought of its early surrender."

"It matters not—Philip dead, Alexander must go back to the very beginning of things," Medius answered.

"I could not believe one so clever in other things could be as foolish with his tongue as thee," Lysimachus retorted, contemptuously. "Tell me, wise youth, why the army, invincible in battle, may not march tomorrow, Alexander having been acknowledged King?"

"Acknowledged, yes, but those who conspired against Philip have still to be hunted down and the kingdom set to rights. And noted you not the joy that shone in the faces of the Grecian envoys and the savage chieftains from beyond our borders

when Philip fell? Nor was one of them present at the palace to commend the act when Alexander was proclaimed King!"

"What of that? Are they not all his creatures and their countries mere dependencies of Macedonia?" the old man said, with lofty disdain.

"They were quiet enough under Philip's rule, the strength of whose arm they knew; but of Alexander they know nothing, and despise him because of his youth; and so the countries Philip overcame and ruled must all be conquered anew by his successor."

"Croaking, mere croaking!" the old man boasted, gazing with pride on Alexander as the latter slowly made his way among the soldiers, welcomed by all with joyful cries.

"Our enemies only know that Philip, the mighty King, is dead, and that an untried youth of twenty fills the throne. In the change they will believe they see a chance to regain their freedom, and not a month will intervene ere blazing war will flash anew on all our borders," Medius prophesied, laying his hand on his sword.

"'Tis not the Greeks nor the barbarians that are most to be feared, Medius," Lysimachus proclaimed, looking around suspiciously as if withholding a secret.

"No, and most unhappy that 'tis so," the other replied, significantly, his eyes fixed upon Lyncestes,

who with ostentatious display of loyalty kept near the Monarch's side.

"What, would you not leave one prince alive with royal blood, Medius?" Lysimachus asked, following the other's look.

"No, if all were tainted as is Lyncestes."

"What harm, pray, can this lonely prince who makes such humble pretence of loyalty, do the King?"

"It matters not the outward show; such men are always to be feared," Medius answered, scowling.

"For shame on such crimping narrowness! What think you would the world say of a court that had not one dependent prince, one scion of royal blood to conspire against the King?"

"So Philip thought, and to his undoing."

"Yes, traitors grew in number and waxed fat because of his complaisance, and good blood has flown ere today because of their connivings," Lysimachus insinuated, touching Medius' breast, which was yet sore from a wound suffered at the hands of the traitorous Prince Amyntas, two years before.

"Such things did not count so long as the King was spared," the young soldier scoffed.

"Philip was ever too confident, Medius. Had he hearkened to what I told him of Amyntas' treason and Pausanias' boastings, he would not now lie in his palace with toes upturned and we be here to



proclaim his son. But tell me, Medius, what has become of Eurydice, the fair young Princess who nursed you back to health after Amyntas' cowardly blow, for in my exile, I must tell you," he chuckled, scanning the other's face, "I often pondered on her devotion and the cause of it."

"You say truly, Lysimachus; she indeed nursed me back to life, but now, grown to womanhood, attends upon the Queen Cleopatra, and with devotion no less unselfish than in my case," Medius murmured, the colour mounting to his face.

"And did naught grow out of the long months of illness and the careful nursing?"

But ere Medius could answer, if indeed he meditated reply, a bugle sounded, and in a moment the cavalcade of the King was in motion amidst the ringing cry:

"Pella! Pella! Pella!" indicating the new capital of the Kingdom, situated in the plains beyond the foothills, which the King now for some reason set out thus hurriedly to visit.

Hearing the cry and its urgency, Lysimachus, who had no heart for so long a ride, slipped from his horse, and making pretence of examining the animal's feet, called out with simulated anger that the steed was lame and broken and could go no farther. Throwing his bridle to a slave, he turned away, but presently espying a convivial group of

soldiers opening a skin of wine in celebration of the new King, he lost no time in joining them.

"This is more to my liking, good friends," he saluted, with amiable warmth, "than a wild ride across the country in the hot afternoon's sun," and filling a cup and holding it aloft, toasted with pompous speech: "Drink, comrades, to the new King and his tutor, Lysimachus!"

Afterward filling his cup afresh, he looked about him leisurely, as if the camp were his, and seeing the young maid who had but a moment before rebuffed him, cried out:

"By the god Bacchus, 'tis she! The blush of rosy morn! The maid with the golden tresses!"

Hearing him, she paid no heed, but stood entranced, watching with tear-dimmed eyes the cavalcade of the King as it swiftly traversed the grass-grown valley.

"Come hither, sweetheart, and share with me this cup. Nay, fear not, for though you treated me but shabbily, I bear thee no malice," the old man persisted, holding out his goblet.

"For shame that such as thee should couple their names with the young King's," she censured, referring to his toast; and taking from her bosom the cup from which Alexander had drunk, she filled it with wine, and raising it above her head, cried, a quaver in her voice:

"Drink, comrades, to your King—our ever glorious King!"

Responding with a cheer, the soldiers emptied each his cup of bull's horn, to the Monarch's health.

"Women like thee with tresses of gold are ever coy and hard to please," Lysimachus cried out anew with sentimental speech, wiping his mouth and sweeping with his eye the crowd of attentive listeners.

"If my hair be red, old man, 'tis better than a pate as bare as thine," the maid retorted, inattentively.

"Know you not, silly child, that a bald head is a sign of wisdom?"

"Nay, 'tis a sign of age and a barren scalp, nothing more," she murmured, her eyes following the King as he spurred his horse at the head of the Companions.

"Saucy jade, to make fun of my infirmity; but the fair are ever obdurate," he reproved, adjusting his short cloak. "Come, chaste one, lovely Carmine, wilt thou not pledge me a cup in this rosy wine?"

"Shame upon thee, old man!"

"Call me not old."

"And are you not?" she asked, her eyes still fixed on the cavalcade of the King as it circled the valley far away.

"In years, sixty; in feelings, thirty; in admiration of such as thee, twenty, and not a day more," the old man piped.

"For shame! Thou art both old and bad and ill become companionship with the young King," she ridiculed.

"Old I may be in years, but not bad! Nay, by thy burning locks and brighter eyes I swear I mean you no harm," he excused, spilling his wine in vain effort to grasp her about the waist.

"Harm, old man! Why, I could tuck thee away under my arm and not feel the weight!" she jeered, backing away.

"And if thou didst thou wouldst find me a willing burden, for the bee buried in ambrosial sweetness clings not to its purpose with greater tenacity than I would clasp thy fair form. Come! I adore thee, sweet maid, and crave but the boon of a kiss in return for the honour," he begged, as she still eluded him.

"Were it the young King now who asked the favour I might not say him nay," she murmured, half aloud, as if she could no longer conceal the expression of her love.

"And couldst thou gaze, think thee, on the mid-day sun, wench?" he chided, as if her words were an offence.

"Yes, if it be a sun crowned with yellow locks and cheeks of red and white; yea, though it were

a very god come down from high Olympus—like the young Prince,” she exclaimed, her sorrowing eyes seeking the cavalcade of the King, now but a speck on the horizon.

“Bah, he hath no use for such as thee, however fair! He’s all for fighting and glory—and more’s the pity.”

“You know him not, old man, for he has the complexion and eyes of a very lover,” she reproved.

“I would he had the heart of one, for there would then be less drilling and more hours of gentle dalliance. And it would be so,” Lysimachus murmured under his breath, “had not the old King’s liking for the fair fiends wrought such ruin that now the son, going to the other extreme, shuns them as if they were accursed.”

“You know him not, old man; and were I different from what I am I would not sleep till I had shot an arrow at his heart to try its temper,” she murmured, a look of indescribable sadness clouding her eyes.

“You would lose your arrow for the pains, for many have tried ere now, and all in vain.”

“If he be thus, ’tis because he hath already loved, for no man, be he king or peasant, unless his heart be scarred by love’s dart, can withstand the wiles of women if they be not ugly or dull,” she said, but absently, as if communing with her own thoughts,

searching the distance while she spoke in vain for some glimpse of the hurrying King.

"It may be as you say," Lysimachus agreed, recalling the life of Alexander and his love for the Bactrian Princess Roxana, who had visited Pella with her father, Oxyartes, the chief of the Persian embassy. "But come, give me a kiss, eyes of blue, nay, green, no, brown—or is it passion that transforms them?" he exclaimed with a silly smile.

"For shame! What wouldst thou if I did but tell the Princess, my mistress, what you crave at the hands of her slave?"

"What! Thou a slave?" Lysimachus cried, deeply stirred, not having noticed the badge of servitude half hidden about her neck. For the old man was not lacking in sensibility, though much given to drink and idle boasting, his convictions being indeed those of an educated man of a more enlightened age.

"Yes, a slave—and why not?" she responded, coldly.

"And what may thy name be, fairest of bond-maidens, if thou be not acting a part?" he inquired, doffing his plumed hat and tucking it beneath his arm.

"Theba," she answered, her heart softened by the old man's deference.

"A most fit name,—and your mistress must hold you in sweet bondage if thy badge of servitude be

an emblem of her favour," he said, pointing to the band of gold that encircled her white neck.

"Yes, in all love, but not in love greater than my own."

"From what country comest thou, if I be not impertinent in the question?"

"From Thebes."

"In Egypt?"

"No, Bœotia."

"A small town, I take it?" he asked, idly, in test of her sincerity.

"No, 'twas old and revered by gods and men long ere Greece had a name," she answered, her eyes lighting up with love in remembrance of her native city.

"Is it still great?" he smiled, as if in ignorance.

"Yes, no enemy has ever stormed its lofty battlements and its standards, held aloft by conquering soldiers, have cast ere now their shadow unhindered across the temples of Sparta and the palaces of its kings," she praised.

"Sparta the unconquerable!" he commented.

"It may be—by all—save Thebes."

"Through what unhappy chance met you this mishap?" he asked, with gentle manner, pointing to the badge of slavery that she wore.

"Our overthrow—in unequal battle," she excused.

"By whom?"

"The Macedonians."

"Where, gentle maid?"

"At Cheronea."

"Ah! and you became—?"

"A part of Philip's spoil."

"And what befell you afterward?" he asked, with hesitating and gentle voice.

"Philip gave me in token of friendship, as a present, to the Princess Eurydice, in remembrance of a service she had rendered one of his soldiers."

"'Twas Medius she thus favoured, he who but now rode by my side; and abundantly it would appear did Philip recompense the Princess for her service," he complimented. "But tell me, gentle one, has the Princess grown in beauty as in stature with the passing years?"

"Yes, her beauty is as great as ever fell to the lot of woman—but while I linger here she may have need of me. Adieu! go seek thy home, ere night approaches and the dew overcomes you," she smiled upon him, as she hurried away.

"Water cannot enter where wine abides, and so I'm proof against the poisonous stuff. But stay, glimpse of the stars," he called in vain, "for by all the gods, Juno herself hath not form so divinely fair and such grace and lightness of foot that it were a King's privilege to kiss the sandals on thy feet!" the old man cried in rapture, as he watched her retreating form. But when she heeded him



not he filled his cup and turning to the soldiers, exclaimed, with a sigh: "Drink to my ending, comrades, for 'tis time to die when fair women flout you because of growing years," and grieving, the old man drained his cup, and so another and another, until, overcome and helpless, he could drink no more. At this the soldiers, to whom his overindulgences were no new thing, carried him in all sobriety to the stream that watered the grassy valley, and lifting him up, plunged him headlong into its silent depths. Sobered by the contact, the old man mounted his horse and took his way to the city, saluting the multitude with solemn dignity, as if he were the King's viceroy and delegated to represent the Monarch in his absence.

## CHAPTER V

### A MESSENGER OF THE GODS

PELLA, the new capital of Macedonia and the pride of the nation, was in a fever of unrest because of Philip's death, which occurrence had been signalled from Edessa, but of the particulars concerning it and the events that followed, nothing whatever had been certainly vouchsafed. And as the hours passed without further news, the soldiers guarding the city, partaking of the general excitement, forgetful of their duty, hastened to join the multitude that filled the streets, thus adding to the disorder and fright. Taking advantage of the turmoil, the partisans of Amyntas, ignorant of his fate, everywhere proclaimed his prior right to the throne, but save a feeble response here and there, the waiting throng was dumb, declining to commit itself one way or another.

What of Alexander, the child of the city and its idol? many asked. Had he, too, as claimed, fallen a victim to the foul conspiracy? If that were true, then the outlook was black indeed. To add to the general alarm, frightful rumours spread that the half-savage mercenaries serving in the King's army had revolted, followed by an uprising

of the slaves in the interior, the control of whom, under the most favourable circumstances, was a matter of extreme difficulty.

Antigonus, the veteran general in command at Pella, ignorant of the true situation at Edessa, and unable to calm the disturbed city, lost no time in signalling to Antipater the state of affairs, and the necessity of the new King's immediate presence if quiet was to be restored and civil war over the succession avoided; and it was knowledge of this, hastily conveyed to Alexander, that caused him to take his sudden departure while reviewing the army in the valley near Edessa, as related in a preceding chapter.

Riding hard, Alexander neared the disturbed capital early in the afternoon of the same day, and as the city where he was born and had grown to manhood came into view, many emotions arose to agitate his heart. There, on the wide-spreading plain that encircled the city on the east, he had as a child marshalled his mimic armies! And on that selfsame plain he had as a youth overcome and conquered Bucephalus, the king of beasts! There, in a shaded palace beside the slumbering lake, his honoured teacher, Aristotle, still dwelt! To the right, the great fortress that could be seen lifting its towering walls beside the picturesque river was Philip's residence and there he had held his court! There, too, it was that in an hour of unrestrained



PELLA

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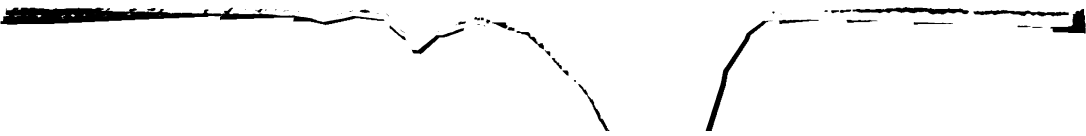
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passion he had discarded the Queen, Olympias, choosing the young and beautiful Cleopatra in her place, to which unfortunate marriage was to be traced all Macedonia's woes—the heartburnings and dissensions of the court; the banishment of Olympias; Alexander's estrangement, and finally the cruel assassination of the King! In the great city upon which he now gazed with sorrowful recollections, Philip had marshalled his victorious army and enriched its palaces and temples with the spoils of the half-savage countries he had conquered!

Because of these memories and the present day's happenings and what might lay before him, the brow of the young King was deeply furrowed and his mind surcharged with many conflicting passions. Approaching the city by a long and narrow causeway that divided the lagoon to the north, Alexander circled the outer wall of the capital and so was able to reach unheeded the royal citadel, separated from the city by the river Lydias. Announcing his approach by the shrill blast of a horn, the anxious governour, heeding the call, lost no time in lowering the drawbridge and admitting the King within the walls of the secure enclosure. Here Alexander happily found the soldiers who guarded the fortress loyal and obedient, and upon his coming being announced, they crowded the walls, welcoming his approach with tumultuous exclamations of joy, crying with one voice: "Long live the

King, Alexander!" Thanking them and causing his accession to the throne to be formally proclaimed, he ordered Antigonus to collect such soldiers as were available and follow him to the city. Then, without dismounting, and attended only by the escort that had accompanied him from Edessa, he entered the streets of the disturbed capital. And this, to the astonishment of every one, proved all-sufficient, for at sight of their beloved Prince all agitation ceased as if by magic, the vast multitude crowding about him and acclaiming him King, without so much as a dissenting voice. Making triumphant progress, elated at his reception, Alexander addressed the excited multitude, explaining the particulars of Philip's death and the punishment meted out to those concerned. Thus within the hour the warlike capital was quieted and his accession formally acknowledged by the joyful inhabitants.

Order being restored, the King and his escort, mounting fresh horses and cheered by the populace, took their departure for Edessa, for there only could he hope to gain news of the tranquillity or otherwise of his disturbed Kingdom. As the cavalcade, now increased by a troop of Thessalian cavalry, neared the foothills of the mountain, discoursing with cheerful spirits on the occurrences at Pella, and the joyful reception accorded the King, attention was directed to a horseman who



approached at full speed from the direction of Edessa. Thinking the rider to be a courier with some message for the King, and deeply agitated as to its import because of the disturbed state of affairs, laughter and light talk gave place to silence and then to surprise and wonder as the stranger, on near approach, proved to be a woman.

"Flame of Heaven, Hephestion, she cannot be of mortal flesh, but some favoured messenger of the gods, sent to watch over the fortunes of men," Clearchus gasped, on recognizing Theba as the mysterious messenger. "Already thrice this day, and in most wondrous manner, has she appeared before the King as if springing from the earth!"

"She is not different from other women, only more fair, and it was chance, nothing else, that has thrown her in the King's way," Hephestion lightly responded, perplexed, nevertheless, by the strangeness of it all.

"Chance! Bah! If not an emissary of the gods, her appearance comes of deep planning and eager desire, such as one might expect only from a mother or an ardent lover."

"You are right, Clearchus, 'tis Venus, the Goddess of Love, who directs her steps," Seleucus, who had joined the King, confidently asserted, scrutinizing the maid as she approached.

"But who is the happy mortal she favours? Some gay cavalier about the King's person—perhaps you,



Hephestion, for you are much in the minds of love-lorn maidens," Clearchus jested.

But ere the other could respond, the messenger, who had reached the beaten road, whirled, and without slackening speed rode directly toward the cavalcade, her face, which before bore traces of anxiety, lighting up with surprise and joy as she recognized the person of the King. Reining in her horse on near approach, she slipped to the ground, and throwing herself on her knees, cried with halting speech, in which there was some touch of shame:

"Thy slave, oh King, craves speech with thee!"

"Thou a slave?" the King exclaimed, recognizing her, as he sprang from his horse and lifted her to her feet.

"Yes, oh King, as thou seest," she said, displaying the badge about her throat.

"It matters not. Speak! The favour thou cravest is granted ere thou makest it," he said, smiling, lifting her to her horse.

"Nay, I come not to ask a favour, but as a messenger," she stammered, crimsoning at the royal favour shown her.

"From whom and of what purport?" he questioned, holding her bridle.

"To warn thee that it has come to the knowledge of the Thracians now in Edessa that Pella is divided and in revolt; and the barbarous chiefs,

thinking to take advantage of the disturbance, have conspired to collect their forces and steal away without awaiting your return to take formal leave."

"For what reason do they contemplate so discourteous an act?" Alexander asked, surprised.

"They hope because of the confusion at Pella to surprise the capital, and gaining entrance sack and burn the city ere aid can be summoned."

"A declaration of war!"

"Yes."

"When is the attack to be made?" the King questioned, stirred by her words.

"Tonight, oh King."

Pondering on what he heard, the King said:

"The surprise of Pella is a thing impossible, even if some laxity existed, as may have been reported."

"They believe it easy of accomplishment, the city having been robbed of part of its garrison by Philip to swell the display at Edessa."

Having no doubt of the good faith of the messenger, yet thinking she must be misled in regard to the plot, he said:

"How came you in possession of this information, so strange and seemingly impossible?"

"It was by chance, oh King, for men pay little thought to the presence of a slave, and the barbarians, thinking their tongue unknown to me, talked without reserve, and I, hearing a little, lingered to hear more, and so became acquainted with the whole plot."

Incredulous, the King asked:

"How happens it that you, a slave, understand their barbarous speech?"

"'Tis simple enough, oh King, for in my youth, being free, I had occasion to learn many tongues, and theirs among the rest."

Surprised and wondering, the King asked:

"Think you the Thracian chiefs have been led to do what they propose by some one in Edessa?"

"I fear so, oh King, from the purport of their speech."

"And why do you fear?"

"Because of its treacherous import to you."

"To me?"

"Yes."

"In what way?"

"That your reign may be discredited from the outset."

Hearing her, Clearchus, sitting breathless, turned to Hephestion, whispering:

"'Tis the work of the traitor, Lyncestes!"

"Know you the name of this confidant, if confidant they have, which I can scarce believe possible?" the King asked, after a pause.

"Not so surely that I dare give it breath. And now, oh King," she hesitated, a weary smile animating her face, "my errand being fulfilled, I crave permission to depart."

"Nay, you shall return to Edessa under my protection, and that I may meanwhile find some way to repay you in part for your great service," the King answered, his countenance confirming his words.

"I crave no reward of any kind, oh King, save permission to depart," she faltered, bending low in obeisance. And ere he could speak she turned her horse, and urging it to a gallop, took her course across the plain, seeking the path by which she came, one indeed scarce known except by escaping slaves and the half-savage denizens of the region.

Musing on her strange coming and what she had said, the King bade Antigonus, who had joined him, return to Pella and make all needed preparations to meet the attack should one be made. This done, he turned to the officers and soldiers forming his escort, exclaiming:

"If what the maid avers be true, let us arm ourselves, for 'tis likely we may encounter the Thracians on their way to surprise the capital."

Hearing the King's words and following his example, the Companions released their weapons and donned their armour, borne by attendant slaves.

"What malignant fate, think you, could have conspired to make this maid a slave?" the King asked, turning to Hephestion, as the cavalcade set forward at a gallop.

"The demon of war, oh King; blind, hungry, and cruel," he responded, sorrowfully, for the gentle bearing of the forlorn maid was a thing to cause the most callous of heart to grieve.

"Whatever the cause, see to it that freedom is granted her, and such allotment of land as may be necessary to sustain her former station," the King directed aside to Hephestion, pondering on her words and her strange knowledge of the Thracian tongue, a thing unlikely unless she were of exalted birth.

"Yes, oh King," Hephestion answered, delighted that so gracious an office should fall to him.


"To what household can she belong?" the King queried, but rather as if meditating on her strange appearance than as if asking a question.

"I know not, oh King, but the Syrian horse she rode belongs to the Princess Eurydice."

"And by that reminder, oh King, I do now remember to have seen her in the Princess' train," Demetrius, a young officer and chief of the pages, interposed, his face suffused with blushes; for, unsuspected by his associates, so it appeared, he had long been secretly enamoured of the fair slave.

"One were not likely to forget a head so fiery red!" Clearchus laughed.

"Red, say you? Rather beaten gold blended with sunlit bronze," Demetrius reproved.



"Nay, I stick to it; a torch at midnight is not more fiery!"

"Late nights and much merry making have distorted your vision, Clearchus," Demetrius cried, his eyes aflame.

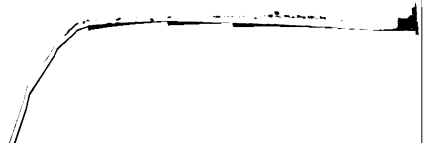
"In my day our young officers maintained a discreet silence when older and wiser men spoke their minds," the other responded coldly.

"And in my day they fight when garrulous men, whatever their age, speak disparagingly of fair women," Demetrius retorted in a rage, grasping his sword and scowling at his companion.

"Tut! Tut! Does the sight of a soft-eyed maid set your blood to tingling thus, my young friend?" Clearchus laughed, no way offended.

"I like not a loose tongue nor flippant manner when gentlewomen are concerned," the lovesick youth reproved, his anger unappeased.

To his fiery speech Clearchus, eying the other good-naturedly, made no reply, and the King presently calling Demetrius to his side, the incident was forgotten.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE AMBUSCADE

As night approached and the King and his escort were hastening with all speed, wearied with the exertions and heat of the day, the cavalcade was suddenly assailed by a flight of arrows from out a grove of stunted trees that concealed the summit of an eminence in their front.

"What new treachery is this?" Alexander cried, forgetful of Theba's warning, as the troop of horse came to a sudden halt, surprised and disorganized by the unexpected attack.

"Flame of Heaven, what has happened since our leaving Edessa, that the King is thus openly attacked?" Clearchus roared, loosening his sword.

"'Tis a Thracian arrow tipped with copper, oh King," Eumenes cried out, plucking a missile from the woollen blanket on which he sat.

"'Twas as the maid foretold," the King laughed, happy in the knowledge that the arrow did not come from one of his own people.

"'Tis sweet revenge that, intent upon the capture of Pella, the barbarians should run into the arms of the King himself," Clearchus chuckled, delighted at the thought of battle with the hereditary enemies of his country.



In the midst of the confusion that ensued, and while those surrounding the King sought to quiet their steeds, a troop of Thracian horse suddenly emerged from the cover of the trees at the summit of the hill. As they advanced they hurled their javelins and these being exhausted, grasped their spears, charging with headlong speed amid the savage war-cries of their country. Happily, the Companions were clad in armour, and so the arrows had injured no one; but the javelins, having greater weight, wounded several about the King, and among them Hephestion, seeing which, Alexander called out:

"By the gods, Hephestion, if they have harmed thee I will not leave a Thracian alive this side the Hellespont."

"'Tis naught, oh King," Hephestion laughed, extracting the weapon.

Greatly relieved—for the King loved the gentle youth as his very life—Alexander turned to Perdiccas, who followed in command of the Thessalian horse, and directed him to divide his force and attack the Thracians on their flanks. Staying only to see that the order was understood, the King lifted his sword as a signal to advance, whereupon the Companions, raising the war-cry of Macedonia, spurred their horses to the attack, meeting the Thracian charge midway of the ascent. But Alexander, disregarding all lesser enemies, dashed for-



THE SURPRISE



ward, attended by Clearchus, to confront the leader of the assailing force, who rode in the centre of his band. Approaching the Thracian chief, the latter, nothing loth, spurred his horse to meet his enemy, and thus they met on the steep incline, the sparks from their swords as they clashed lighting up the combatants like a flash of fire in the gathering night. But Alexander, whom no one was ever able to withstand in single combat, furious at the treachery of a foe who assailed him while still his guest, scarce tarried to exchange thrusts with the barbarian, but catching the latter's weapon on his upturned shield, raised his sword aloft with a cry of fury, cleaving the skull of his opponent with the vengeful stroke.

While the King and those about him were thus engaged, Perdiccas' troop, circling the Thracian foe to right and left, charged with terrifying cries from rear and flank. This attack, following quick upon the chieftain's death, threw the enemy into wild disorder; but, brave to temerity, they still fought on, until at last, disheartened and uncertain of the force that assailed them from every quarter, they reluctantly gave up the struggle, and lowering their weapons, sought safety in the obscurity of the extended plain. Making no effort to pursue the flying enemy, the King dismounted and sought out the wounded, after which he gave directions for the sepulture of the dead. Then mounting his

horse, he resumed his rapid journey, riding with bent head and troubled brow, deeply concerned as to the safety of Edessa in his front.

While every one kept silent, respecting the pre-occupation of the King, Clearchus, who paid at best but slight regard to the etiquette of the court, cried out with an oath:

"'Twas a cunning ambushment, Hephestion, and stirring while it lasted—but all too short."

"I thought it long enough," the other, who had been wounded a second time, replied dryly.

"I would it had been daylight, that we might have pursued the beasts," Seleucus lamented.

"The attack was planned by the barbarians on the moment, for they did not desire an encounter, having Pella in their eye," Perdicas ventured.

"Luckily we were prepared, thanks to the Theban maid," Eumenes commented.

"But suppose it had been otherwise, and the King, unarmed, had fallen, and the throne became vacant anew—surely it would have been Macedonia's undoing," Clearchus reflected.

"Think you 'tis the forerunner of a general war, or is it the treachery of a single chief?" Perdicas queried, looking toward the King.

"'Tis the thought of all—the impulse men have to free themselves from bondage once they see a way," the King answered, discerning in the revolt the rising of the enemies of Macedonia on all her borders.

"Flame of Heaven, must we subdue the savages anew, getting nothing but slaves and filthy sheepskins for our pains?" Clearchus complained.

"Yes, this outbreak, where bread was broken and wine drunk but yesterday in pledge of lasting friendship, is a harbinger of what's to follow," the King answered, reflecting on the situation. "And 'tis a pity for I would have given them security, in the enjoyment of which they might have learned the arts of peace. But 'tis with barbarians as with savage animals, that what the sword has won the sword must hold!" he cried, the softness dying out of his voice at thought of the strife to come. For except that it would put off the invasion of Persia, the coming struggle disturbed the King not at all; for in truth he loved the turmoil and roar of battle, the thrust of spear and clash of swords, as other men loved peaceful things.

Hurrying forward without further speech, the cavalcade reached the circling valley in the farther extremity of which the ancient capital of Edessa lay outspread. Here, beside the mountain stream that wound its way through the slumbering vale, the army lay encamped, but of its presence there was no sign, the soldiers, overwrought with wine and the excitement of the day, having long since sought their tents, only the sentinels going their rounds giving evidence of life. Pushing on, the King and those about him breathed a sigh of relief

at the deep stillness that everywhere prevailed as they reached the confines of the ancient city.

Drawing rein in happy contentment, the King surveyed the picturesque capital in all its length, its old and timeworn structures reflecting back the glistening white of the moon, now at its full. To the right and left, against the mountain's side, camp-fires glimmered like fireflies, where visitors from abroad had found a place of shelter in the overcrowded city. At the farther extremity of the valley the rock-cut pass that connected the city with the mountain district beyond, could be plainly seen winding its tortuous way to the heights above, where on a projecting cliff the moss-grown citadel that had been the home of the older kings showed black and sombre in the shadows of the oaks that grew about its base. Beside the castle wall a mountain torrent, glistening in the moonlight, plunged from the towering height, to be lost in mists and wild cascades as it reached the valley far below. Beyond the precipitous cliff purple shadows clothed the valleys and foothills of the mountain depths as they rose to greater and greater stretches, to be lost at last in the snow-clad summit far above. Such was Edessa, the burial place of the Dorian Kings, and where for four hundred years, and until Philip's time, the Macedonian Monarchs had held their court.

Refreshed as by sleep at what they saw, the caval-

cade of the King pursued its way, to find the streets deserted save by watchful sentinels who, with uplifted spears, guarded the peace of the ancient town. For Antipater, who knew no middle course, mindful of the overwrought passions of the populace, had ordered that only the guard and frequenters of the court might be abroad during the hours of the night. Thus the King's return was all unheeded save by the Theban maid, who having returned to Edessa, eagerly watched his coming from the shadow of a deep portico that looked forth from an old and half-dismantled palace, where the young Queen, Cleopatra, resided during the temporary stay of the court at Edessa. Emerging into the moonlit night as the King passed like the flight of a meteor, she held out her arms in supplication:

"I love thee, oh King, thou who art fairer than a Grecian god. Yes, I a slave and thou the mightiest of all the earth! But thou dost not stay nor wouldst thou heed couldst thou hear my cry. Oh cruel fate!" she sobbed, falling on her knees, "will my wearied heart once free, ne'er beat again except with love's despairing cry? And thou, oh King, is thy heart untouched that 'tis so cold? Or is it filled, as the idle say, with visions of Roxana, the hated Bactrian maid? But if thou lovest another, what matter who it be? Yet the thought that thou mayest still treasure her sets my brain to whirling, and the world is not so great that I would not



traverse its wide extent to kill her if indeed thou lovest her. But what would I gain? Thy hatred! And better 'tis that thou shouldst treasure this absent one than some designing creature of the court, which last I could by no means bear. For I could not live if I did but see thee smile in love upon a woman! What, oh cruel gods, is this thing that consumes me? Is it in truth love, or some foul distemper having its semblance without reality? Yet am I all distraught, having no peace of mind day or night. And so it has been, and thou, oh King, all unconscious of my love or that I live! Yet do I love thee and shall forever more. But grant me, oh ye gods, some peace of mind that seeing I may not see, and loving, may no longer know I love. For he whom I love, in maddest frenzy, is of another world, like unto yonder glimmering star that knoweth not we look upon it, but goeth its way having no feeling; circling forever in the far-off sky!"

Thus mourning, the gentle maid, her eyes blinded with tears, long bemoaned her fate, but at last, exhausted by her vigil and the sorrowful happenings of the day, drew her mantle about her and pressing her heart to still its aching, sought the seclusion of the gloomy palace.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DUNGEONS OF THE ANCIENT CITADEL

OLYMPIAS, the deposed Queen, having, as we have seen in the opening chapter of this story, witnessed with vengeful joy the death of Philip and the proclaiming of Alexander, stood for some moments stern and threatening, looking down on the body of the dead Monarch. Then, her features relaxing, she slowly made her way to the vacant throne, and ascending the steps, seated herself in the chair reserved for Cleopatra, the youthful Queen of Philip. In this forceful and brutal way—and as might have been expected of her—did she assert her claim to be queen, of which title she had been deprived by Philip. Divining her purpose, a few of the more forward and politic of the court party approached the throne as they passed from the building and made humble obeisance to the irate woman. But the multitude, not knowing who she was, merely stared or whispered among themselves as they hurried away, thinking the majestic woman with yellow hair tinged with gray, who thus occupied the throne, to be some demented person who took advantage of the confusion to make a display of her vanity. But further than this act of sovereignty, Olympias, conscious of the hatred of the

multitude, did not obtrude herself, lest doing so she dampen the love that the people bore her chivalrous son.

Seated on the throne, coldly silent, surrounded by the bewildered pages, she watched the departure of the multitude that filled the theatre; but when it became apparent, from the cries without, that there would be no opposition to Alexander, her face lighted with a gentle smile, such as a loving mother, guiltless of offence, might show in the good fortune of a beloved son. When at last the edifice was cleared she arose and took her departure, going out of her way with ostentatious parade to pass the spot still wet with Philip's blood. Stopping to view the grewsome spectacle, from which the attendant pages shrank back in horror, she exclaimed, with clenched hands and eyes afire with hate:

"I would I could myself have killed thee, thou monster—such preferment was unworthy the weakling who struck thee down!"

For this ferocious woman hated Philip dead not less than Philip living, and thus she publicly outraged his memory as she viewed the spot where he had given up his life. And not altogether unnatural was her hatred, for as a girl she had loved the great King with barbaric passion, but when he wearied of her and wedded a secondary wife, and then another, and so on without number, and finally took to himself a new queen, hatred took the place of love, and

thereafter she pursued him living as she now spurned him dead.

Reaching the entrance to the theatre, she dismissed her attendants, and entering a curtained chair bade the slaves convey her to the castle of the old kings that topped the cliff of the adjacent mountain where she had found a residence since her return from exile. Slowly traversing the streets of the ancient capital, filled to overflowing with the excited multitude, she hid herself behind the curtains of the chair lest some enemy, seeing her, might raise a discordant cry and so imperil the fortune of her cherished son. For this barbaric, half-crazed Queen, governed in all things by her passions, had all the tenderness of a loving mother for Alexander, so that throughout her life when naught else would quiet her; his name was all-sufficient to stay her murderous temper.

Reaching the ancient citadel, she called Harpalus, the governour, to her, and losing no time, questioned him concerning the present condition of the crumbling castle and its attendant guards. Satisfied in this respect, she bade him conduct her through the old stronghold, many of the rooms of which had long since been dismantled and abandoned. When she had visited the habitable part of the ancient edifice, she directed him to lead her to the dungeons located beneath the castle. These, hewn out of the solid rock, she found untenanted,

prisoners of state being now confined in the fortress at Pella, as more convenient since the transfer of the capital to that city. Looking about her with coldly curious eyes, the Queen said:

"The air, Governour, has an unwholesome and mouldy flavour, as if from the decaying bodies of those who once tenanted these cells."

"That may well be, oh Queen, for in building it is clear there was no thought of ventilation."

"What need when one has so short a hold on life?"

"Truly, oh Queen, and it needs no one to tell us that the old kings gave little thought to those they thrust within these slimy vaults."

"And why should a king concern himself with such trivial things?" she laughed as if demented.

"I know not, oh Queen," he responded with fawning subserviency.

"The pits afford scarce room to stand erect," she went on, thrusting the torch he bore into the black depths, for the cells had no entrance save an opening in the ceiling which was closed with a heavy block of stone.

"The builder, 'tis plain, gave little thought to the prisoner's comfort," he answered with a sickly smile.

"And is it as has been told me," she questioned, "that the governour of the citadel may flood the cells at will by water conveyed through hidden conduits?"

"Yes, oh Queen, for I have myself tested the device."

" 'Tis said that the old kings often hastened the death in that way of prisoners hateful to them."

"It may have been, but of that I have no knowledge, such practice not having been followed during the late reign."

"No, Philip was not circumspect or kingly in his methods, but chose, rather, to put men to death openly, so that all the world might see and gossip," she commented with ill-concealed disdain.

"That was indeed his way."

"Yes, and more praiseworthy in a butcher than a King," she scorned.

"Yes, oh Queen."

"But whence comes the water so deftly conveyed by the hidden conduits?" she questioned, flashing the light within the cell above which they stood.

"From the mountain stream that flows beside the castle."

"A cold bath, good Governour, and one that must set the prisoner's teeth a-chattering," she smiled grimly.

"The water is like ice—melted snow scarce half an hour from the mountain-top."

"Have the pits indeed no opening except that through which the prisoner is lowered?" she queried.

"None, save a crevice looking out on the face of the precipice, that the governour may open or close at will."

"Is it true, as whispered among the vulgar, that the water may be turned on in a stream so small that days, nay weeks, may be occupied in filling the cell?"

"Yes, oh Queen: a drop at a time if it be so desired."

"The prisoner, meanwhile, having naught to do but watch and wait in terror, chilled to the marrow?" she continued, coldly peering into the gloomy depths.

"Yes, gracious Queen," Harpalus answered, shuddering as if menaced by the fate she described. For this nobleman, truth to tell, was known throughout the Kingdom for his insatiable avarice and nefarious practices, and so was ever ill at ease when questions concerning the punishment of state prisoners were discussed.

"Could the sound of a prisoner's cries by any possibility reach listening ears, think you?" she asked.

"No; to be confined within these cells is as if buried in the heart of the mountain that for miles o'ertops the citadel."

"The old kings were wise in their contrivances, Harpalus!" she commented grimly, looking about her.

"Yes."

"The pits are large enough, but not too large, and have light and air, but not too much of either. A dainty resting-place to lodge—a Queen, eh, Governour? And worthy too of Attalus, Cleopatra's uncle, who contrived her crowning. Will either sleep as soundly here; think you, as in their beds? Entombed, they will listen all aghast for the coming flood! And presently a gentle, bubbling flow trickles into the damp apartment; then ceasing, but only to begin anew, and thus for days and weeks! Ha! A most fit prison, good friend—and such as becomes those who have brought about the dethronement of Macedonia's lawful Queen," she went on with cruel voice, clearly disclosing the use she contemplated making of the gloomy prison. "But come, I have seen enough; show me the cunning contrivance by which the water is admitted within the cells," she commanded, returning the torch to Harpalus and motioning him to proceed.

Leading the way, he took her to that part of the citadel where the mountain river plunged from the precipitous cliff to the valley below, and stooping, pointed out the device by which the governour was able to fill the conduits at pleasure.

"By raising this," Harpalus explained, touching a lever, "the cell may be flooded within the hour, or if only partially, the time may be extended, according to the flow that is admitted to the pipe."



"Nothing could be more simple and every way worthy the old King Perdiccas, who planned it. Thus he could at will mete out punishment to those who displeased him, while he ate, slept, laughed, and hunted, as a king should."

"It might have been so, oh Queen."

"It was so; but enough of this. I am pleased with you, Harpalus," she went on, smiling upon him amiably, "and shall have early occasion to use the cunning contrivances you have shown me. Hold yourself in readiness against the hour, and remember," she frowned, "that I will be obeyed in all things. The King may not afterward find it politic to sanction my acts, but neither will he punish those who carry them out," and in this she spoke truly, for such was the regard Alexander bore his unhappy mother that throughout his reign, while he sought in every way to restrain her vengeful and passionate outbreaks, he would never publicly disavow her acts or punish her agents.

Having completed her inspection of the castle, the Queen motioned Harpalus to lead the way to the main body of the building, where she occupied apartments Philip had prepared for her on her return from Epirus. There, from the lofty heights overlooking the ancient city, the implacable woman had watched his preparations for the memorable festival at the theatre to commemorate his greatness and enshrinement among the gods of Greece.

and there, abandoned and forgotten by him, she had urged on the cruel conspiracy that had resulted in his murder. Now, exulting in her revenge, she schemed to bring about the destruction of all he loved or who had in any way benefited by her degradation.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ABANDONED QUEEN

IN the provision made by Philip for the stately ceremonies at the theatre, cut short by his untimely death, he had arranged that the Queen, Cleopatra, should await him in the King's room, off the great hall of audience. In accordance with his planning and keenly alive to the happy part she was to bear in the brilliant ceremony, the beautiful woman reached the theatre some time in advance of the King. There, robed in state and wearing the jewelled crown of the Queen of Macedonia, she impatiently awaited his coming to join him on the throne. While thus occupied, listening with delight to the flattering comments of her attendants and the cheers of the multitude as Philip approached the great building, she and those about her were startled by the cry of horror that filled the throats of the lookers-on as the King was stricken down by Pausanias. When amidst the confusion she was apprised of what had happened, the unhappy woman stood dazed and trembling, overwhelmed by the magnitude and suddenness of the stroke, and when at last the full purport of what had occurred flashed upon her benumbed mind, she uttered a cry of despair and fell fainting in the arms of her attendants.

It was not the cry of a simple woman, but that of a proud, all-powerful Queen, suddenly and irretrievably ruined; and mingling with it the plaintive anguish of an ambitious and loving mother whose son's hopes of the crown were forever blasted and his life jeopardized by what had happened. It was, withal, the heartbroken cry of a devoted wife who had lost an honoured and beloved husband; for while her marriage to Philip had been one of ambition only, the King's greatness and charm of manner had so won upon her that she at last had come to love and adore him. And this not strangely, for it was said of him that he possessed so great a soul that no one, however prejudiced, could long withstand the charm of his remarkable personality. And in the King's sudden and terrible death the Queen foresaw, as by a lightning flash, the overthrow of all her hopes, and with them the ruin of Ceranus, her young and beloved son by Philip. For, most unwisely it appeared, in the light of what had now occurred, she had put forward the young Prince from the hour of his birth, as heir to the throne in opposition to the rightful claimant. Thus he had become a menace to the ascendancy of Alexander, and this being true, what other fate than death could now await the helpless child from his all-powerful rival! Or if Alexander, generous in all things, should disregard the danger as Philip had in the case of Amyntas, Olympias, whose im-

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placable hatred Cleopatra had incurred in supplanting her as Philip's Queen, could by no means be similarly placated.

One there was, Attalus, her uncle, the most powerful of the Macedonian nobles and the trusted confident of Philip, who, if he were present, would seek to protect the hapless Queen and her son in this great overthrow of fortune. But alas, he was away in Asia with the advance army of invasion, nor could Cleopatra in her most fateful thoughts have dreamed that within the hour couriers would be dispatched in hot haste commanding Parmenio, the general in command beyond the Hellespont, to put Attalus to death or send him home in chains; and that the courier reaching Asia would seek out Parmenio, and the two presently engaging the doomed man in amiable converse, Philotas, Parmenio's son, coming up behind, would run the unsuspecting noble through the body. Thus it was to be and according to the simple custom of the times, such expedition having the effect to save the State embarrassing complications, and being, beside, it was thought, a fit ending for all who plotted to overthrow the rightful heir to the throne, as Attalus had done.

In this way the sole stay of the young Queen was put to death, and in its consummation Olympias openly rejoiced, for it was he who had brought about the hateful marriage of Philip with Cleo-

patra, and her, Olympias', degradation. She! Olympias! The mother of Alexander and the descendant of a hundred kings! And happy it would appear, was Attalus in the manner of his taking off, for thus he escaped the fate Olympias meditated for him, and which she had coldly planned while visiting the hideous dungeons of the ancient castle.

Direful was the glimpse of the future and its happenings that flashed across the mind of Cleopatra as, listening, dazed and anguished, to word of Philip's murder, she fell fainting in the arms of her attendants. Nor had the unhappy woman on coming back to life long to wait ere feeling the change Philip's death had wrought. For immediately Alexander was proclaimed, those in waiting upon her who had before struggled for a smile of approbation, now anticipating Olympias' quick return to power, hurriedly deserted their august mistress, nor thought it necessary to excuse themselves therefor. For the dullest courtier could not but see that with Philip's fall, his Queen, before all-powerful, would have no strength whatever, and that only disgrace, perhaps death, awaited those who should longer favour her. The new King, so they reasoned, would be governed by questions of decency and public policy, if not of generosity; but Olympias, whose savage rage no one could appease, they foresaw, would stop at nothing to avenge her

wrongs if not restrained by Alexander—and who can restrain a mother who is at once loving and imperious, and who, moreover, has been the victim of a cruel wrong!

For Alexander's unexpected rise, it was clear to all, meant the reinstatement of Olympias as Queen, she of barbaric passions, now heated to the pitch of frenzy by her abandonment and long exile. No vengeance, it was believed, that she could contrive would satiate the deadly hatred she bore the woman who had supplanted her; and so it were little less than treason—nay, treason were a light offence to befriending the now dethroned and unprotected Queen. Reasoning thus, every one fled as if she were plague-stricken, save one kindly soul, the Princess Eurydice, daughter of the royal Menetaus, who had long before lost his life at Philip's hands. This gentle creature stayed, and strangely it was thought, for her attendance upon the Queen was voluntary and of but recent date; but so it was, and thus it fell out that of all those who but a moment before had paid court to the beautiful and all-powerful Cleopatra, only this true heart remained behind to comfort and sustain her.

For an hour or more Eurydice and the attendant slaves worked with trembling hands and blanched faces over the afflicted Queen, reviving her for a moment, only to see her sink back again in the deadly faint that held her. And when at length



the stricken woman had regained some strength of heart, she lay as one in a trance, her mind unbalanced by the unexpected stroke. When at last consciousness returned, she gazed about her with staring eyes, and meeting only constrained and averted looks, raised herself, trembling and affrighted, as remembrance of what had happened flashed upon her mind.

"Tell me, child, is it true that the King is dead? Murdered, as they said?" she whispered.

To this Eurydice made no response save by her tears and averted face, for who can speak when speech destroys the earthly hopes of one afflicted? Seeing this, the bereaved Queen buried her face in her hands, sorrowing, forgetful of those about her.

"Oh, my beloved, my gentle Philip, so forceful with men, so tender with me, art thou indeed dead? Gone like a torch quenched in the night, leaving the world in darkness! Oh, my love, noblest of men, how I entreated, sought to save you, but you would not—fearing naught. Now, stricken, I can do nothing but lament thy unhappy fate!" she moaned, groping her way blinded by tears to the door that led to the theatre beyond. But, gently restraining her, Eurydice said:

"Stay, oh Queen, for the body of the King has already been borne to the palace with every honour that could be paid it."

"What! Has it been so long—and I lying here as one dead! Oh woman! Woman!" she moaned, "have you no office in the tragedies of life save weakness; no heart to bear a part, no strength to shield the threatened one?"

To this outbreak Eurydice made no response save to redouble her efforts to quiet the distressed woman. At last, somewhat calmed, the bereaved Queen looked about her, and seeing no one but Eurydice and the waiting slaves, screamed with staring eyes and growing terror:

"Where are my attendants, Eurydice? Those whose office it is to wait upon my person? Why are they absent from me now in my great bereavement?"

"They hastened to follow the King's body to the palace, but that act of homage paid, they will return to resume their places near your person," Eurydice soothed, striving to calm the Queen and hoping it would be as she had said.

"No, no, they will never return, and you but seek to cover up their perfidy. Oh ye gods, oh Philip, oh my lost King, seest thou in death, that I am abandoned, cast aside, a thing apart, left to the vengeance of those I have offended?" she moaned in her despair.

"Fear not, oh Queen, for you have friends who will hasten to your side, if only to show their love and gratitude," Eurydice faltered, gazing wistfully

about her to discover if she might one faithful follower among those who had lately been in attendance on the Queen. But vainly, for only the lowly forms and meek faces of the patient slaves met her anxious gaze.

"No need to look, for all alike have fled. No, not one is true save you, who have no interest except your love in serving me," the Queen sorrowed.

"It is noble in you to forget your kindness to my unhappy mother, the Princess Parcleles, but I, treasuring it in love, think myself forever blessed in being near you now," Eurydice responded, striving to infuse some courage into her voice.

"But because of that you shall not sacrifice yourself to comfort me in my distress. No, go, my child, and in the companionship of those who possess all power, keep your young life free from my unhappy fate."

"No, sweet Queen, I will not leave you, and there is one who will hasten hither once he has leave to quit the Prince's side," she comforted.

"No, not one, for I can no longer reward devotion, and but imperil the lives and fortunes of those who serve me."

"Yes, one there is, strong of arm and resolute of heart—did he but know of your distress," Eurydice persisted with downcast eyes and flaming face.

"No, sweet child, 'tis not to my side that Medius would hasten, but to thine," the Queen sighed,

knowing of his love for Eurydice. Suddenly, starting up anew, she cried out with fresh alarm, her voice showing some touch of shame: "What of Alexander, child? Speak! Has he sent no messenger, no word of greeting to his father's Queen in this her hour of greatest need?" she sobbed, at this new proof of her abandonment.

"The neglect is not of his choosing, oh Queen, for the slaves bring word that the city is in a turmoil of confusion and fear, men running hither and thither, no one being able to foresee the end, the Prince pursuing his way the while as one groping in the dark, not knowing whether night may see him King or fleeing for his life."

"Tell me, will the citizens, forgetful of Philip and Ceranus, his infant son, receive Alexander's pretensions to the throne with favour?" Cleopatra asked, thinking of the fortunes of her helpless child.

"Yes, or so it appears from their show of loyalty and affection."

"Then he will surely be King?"

"So 'tis thought if the army approves the choice of the multitude, but unless it does the will of the populace will go for naught."

"Will it thus favour him, think you?" the poor Queen asked with excited breath, hope for her son reviving in her heart.

"Yes, for it loves and trusts him and has been taught by Philip in years past to regard him as the future King."

To this Cleopatra made no response, thinking with bitter regret of her compromising effort to secure the succession for her infant son, and the peril that now threatened him because of it.

## CHAPTER IX

### NEWS FROM WITHOUT

WHILE the unhappy Queen waited, in anguish of heart, in the abandoned theatre, as narrated in the preceding chapter, the Princess Eurydice suddenly cried out, a note of welcome in her voice:

"See, oh Queen, 'tis as I have said, your friends, informed of your distress, have lost no time in hastening to your side!" and blushing scarlet, the young girl retreated in confusion behind the Queen, as a handsome cavalier, followed by an old man of majestic mien, hurriedly entered the room.

Seeing them, the Queen gave an exclamation of surprise and thankfulness, and well she might, for they were men to count upon where danger threatened, and coming now in Cleopatra's distress, their presence served in some measure to reassure the despairing woman. The first to greet the Queen, bending low and kissing her hand, was Medius, a Prince of noble lineage, whom we have already seen in the train of Alexander. The owner of a vast domain about Mt. Bermion, he was a lineal descendant of the primitive kings of Macedonia, but eschewing all pretensions to royalty, was content with his patrimony and the friendship of the Dorian Monarchs. Nor was it by chance that the

young nobleman was now in Edessa, for on coming into his inheritance, he came with a magnificent retinue to pay homage to the King, his lord, and having come, stayed on to worship at the shrine of Eurydice, whom, indeed, he had known and treasured as a youth. But abashed, he had not as yet declared his love, for to him it was as if she were a goddess and he a mountain shepherd, fit only to worship from afar. Consumed by his passion, which grew with each day's passing, he stayed on at Philip's court, finding excuse therefor at last in the service of Alexander.

Saying naught of his passion, he was content if he might see the object of his love, and perchance perform for her some gentle office of devotion. Thus his passion was unknown to those about him, but if the world was blind, the object of his adoration was not; for what woman was ever truly loved and remained in ignorance thereof? But of this knowledge she gave no sign lest indeed she betray her own secret, save that she contrived occasion from day to day to keep him employed about the court and so always near her person.

Jaron, the companion of Medius, long a favourite and trusted physician of Philip, was famed the country over for his knowledge and austerity. A soothsayer and dealer in magic withal, he was held in fear by many because of the unknown and mysterious power he was thought to possess. For

the age was one of dire superstition, given up to incantations and belief in the occult powers of those especially favoured by the gods in that direction. Conscious of Cleopatra's peril, he now hastened to her side in remembrance of favours received at the hands of Philip, and this as if it were a duty incumbent upon him and a thing agreed upon beforehand.

Receiving them, the unhappy Queen raised her eyes to heaven in fervent thanks to the gods for vouchsafing her these friends in her hour of need, and taking the hand of Medius in both her own, exclaimed with grateful voice:

"Receive the welcome of an unhappy woman once powerful, but now deserted and alone! Nay, do not answer, but tell me," she questioned, with a sad smile, "what brings you to my side when all the world is occupied with its own affairs?"

"I come in haste direct from Alexander, the King, and at his express command, some word of your distressful plight having reached his ears," he smiled, bending low in homage.

"From the King!" she exclaimed, disappointment at this intimation of his enthronement showing in her countenance.

"Yes, oh Queen, for he has now been proclaimed, both by the people and the army."

"If that be true, why does he not come to me, his father's Queen?" she questioned with something of her old hauteur.



"He set out for Pella an hour since, the urgency of affairs at the capital calling him thence in all haste."

"For Pella! What business takes him there at this distressful moment?" she asked, surprised.

"To quiet the confusion that has arisen in consequence of Philip's sudden death."

"Sent he no kindly word, no token of his favour?" the Queen reproved, with growing anxiety, remembering the danger and harassment Alexander had suffered in the past through her contriving.

"Yes, gracious messages of love, bidding me add, that sorely stricken in heart he joins with you in sorrowful remembrance of his exalted father."

"Messages of love!" she murmured, unmindful of all else, her active mind meditating upon the possibilities of the future. And not unnaturally, for had she not prevailed upon Philip to make her Queen—to put her above all the world! Why might she not hope to win his son whom she indeed had once loved! Thus, and only thus, would Ceranus be safe! Surely she had lost nothing of her bewildering beauty nor the cunning arts that neither men nor kings had hitherto been able to resist!

"Yes, he bade me assure you of the respect that a dutiful son owes the honoured Queen of his august father," Medius went on, divining some-

thing of her thoughts and recalling Alexander's unalterable devotion to Roxana in the past.

"Think you that Pella and the soldiers stationed there will confirm the choice of a King in whose selection they had no voice?" she questioned coldly, conscious of Medius' rebuff.

"Yes, it is so believed, oh Queen."

"Of what purport was the news that hastened Alexander's departure?"

"That, immediately upon word of the death of the late King being spread abroad in Pella, a faction sought preferment for another in place of Alexander."

"And who is it they seek to proclaim King instead?" she asked with bated breath, thinking of the chances of Ceranus.

"The Prince Amyntas."

"Amyntas! You jest?"

"No, 'tis as I say."

"The weakling and traducer of Philip! No! No! It cannot be," she cried, unable to restrain her anger and disappointment.

"Yet so it is, but unavailingly, since Amyntas has already been put to death."

"Put to death!" she gasped.

"Yes, oh Queen, and rightfully, all thinking men believe."

"And he being out of the way and Ceranus helpless, Alexander will everywhere be proclaimed as at Edessa," she murmured half aloud.

"So it is thought, though a contrary demonstration has been signalled from Lyncestia, one of the mountain districts, but whether it grows or will die from lack of support we are not yet advised."

Hearing this, the brow of the fond mother relaxed as if she saw in this some ray of hope for Ceranus, the young Prince. For while in Macedonia the succession rightfully belonged to the heir apparent, yet in the end the crown fell to him who had the greatest strength, as it had in Philip's case.

"Think you the Lyncestian princes have anything to do with the disturbance?"

"Yes, without doubt, since all of them were concerned in the conspiracy to murder Philip."

"Parties to Philip's death! How know you this?" she asked, surprised.

"It has been clearly proven, and two have already been condemned because of it."

"That is as it should be—and the other?"

"Lyncestes, sometimes called Alexander, the King has pardoned."

"Wherefore, if he too was concerned in the foul conspiracy?"

"On account of his coming forward to salute and arm the new King when the crown was in doubt, but more particularly because of his being the son-in-law of Antipater, Philip's honoured governour," Medius answered, coldly.

"Thus it will be, the assassin pardoned, while others innocent of offence will be pursued as enemies of the King!" she cried, turning to Jaron, who had meanwhile patiently waited for her to address him.

Taking advantage of the interruption, Medius hastened to the side of Eurydice, whispering in a passion of love as he clasped her hand and pressed it to his lips:

"Heart of gold, thou to whom I owe my life and without whom life would have no value, have you in your distress no look nor word of love, no greeting save that of friendship?"

Blushing, she received him with a smile of loving welcome, her heart filled with gratitude at his coming and open avowal of his passion. Thus the misfortunes of the Queen broke down the barrier that separated these true hearts, but of her love she gave no present expression save the pressure of his hand, deterred by the presence of her mistress, the Queen.

Responding to Cleopatra's questioning look, Jaron approached the Queen, and kneeling, kissed her hand in humble reverence, a thing unusual and startling in its significance; for he had paid her but slight homage in the plenitude of her power, holding his office in such high esteem as to regard mere acts of courtly deference beneath his dignity. But now, coming to the deserted woman, his heart was

touched, and he hastened to pay her the homage he had refused her when a Queen, as he had Olympias before her. But to those who saw him kneel, it was plain that in the act he foreshadowed the dangers that enveloped the unhappy woman—dangers that he would not have regarded coming to the strong in life, but mourned as old men will when they overtake and darken the lives of those who are young and helpless.

Surprised and deeply moved by his unexpected act of devotion, the Queen said: "I fear I shall have but little occasion for your services hereafter, good leech; but thank you with all my heart for coming to me now—you who have no favours to ask of the court and care not which faction is in the ascendancy."

"Those, oh Queen, who art set apart to minister to the sick and the afflicted have little time or inclination for aught else. I hasten to you now, grieved, as are all true men, at your distress; and coming, place myself and my life at your disposal."

"Do all true men thus grieve and you only come to tell me that it is so?" she chided, sweeping the room with her tear-dimmed eyes. "Were they not true men who an hour ago served me so zealously, but now find convenient occupation elsewhere?"

"The idle and dissolute who crowd the courts of Kings have no offices of kindness save for those who can advance their fortunes. They have no

heart, as you now see, oh Queen, and their devotion when fortune smiles foretells only disappointment in the hour of need."

"I care not for their abandonment, only as it may portend some disastrous stroke to follow. What think you of its import?"

"I cannot foretell the future more than you, oh Queen, though such foresight is believed of me."

"Why do you evade me? Think you Alexander meditates harm to me or mine?" she asked impulsively.

"As regards yourself, no, oh Queen, but he being King, it were wise in those who threaten his security to find safety outside the realm," he warned.

"Then you think my son's life in danger?"

"Does he not menace Alexander's tenure? Has he not been put forward by those unfriendly to the new King, and will they not continue to use him, regardless of his true interests or the peace of the Kingdom?"

"Philip did not thus regard Amyntas when he put him aside, but permitted him to live in safety and honour."

"Yes, and doing so became a party to his own overthrow. But if Alexander be not forward in the business, can Olympias' hand be stayed, think you?" the leech pointed out, as if forecasting some physical ailment of the body.

"Ungrateful savage! 'Twas she who compassed the King's death, and all through my weakness in

permitting her return from exile. Nay, 'twas I who urged Philip to bring her back that she might witness her daughter's marriage to the Epirot King, not thinking harm could come of it. Oh fool! Fool! That I, whom Philip so praised for wisdom, should have been so blind and weak!" she sobbed.

"'Tis useless to lament the past, oh Queen, when the present moment claims all our thoughts. But of Ceranus; where is the young Prince?" he asked abruptly, scanning the room.

"He is at the palace, cared for by those whose duty it is to attend him."

"And has no provision been made for his—safety?" the leech questioned with troubled brow.

"None, save such as is afforded by his attendants. Think you present harm threatens him?" she questioned, alarmed by Jaron's words.

"I know not, oh Queen, but 'twould be like Antipater to act quickly in the matter, thinking to save the King embarrassment," Jaron pressed, not seeking to hide the imminence of the danger.

Hearing him, the distraught woman turned to Medius in a frenzy of fear, exclaiming:

"You, Medius, can protect him—Ceranus, my son—from the assassin's hands! You, the friend of the King and clothed with his power. Come—hasten to him, ere it is too late," and grasping his hand, the half-crazed woman, white with fear, dragged him from the room, followed by Jaron and Eurydice.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE ABDUCTION

As the Queen and Medius neared the door of the theatre, the tumult without, which had somewhat abated with the passing hours, now suddenly assumed an aspect so savage and threatening that she stopped, affrighted, thinking the multitude sought her life. Clinging to her companion, she exclaimed:

"How have I offended that I should be so hated by the people? Surely I have never done them harm of any kind!"

"Fear not, oh Queen," he soothed, "the anger of the populace no way concerns you, but spends itself in execration of those implicated in the King's death."

"Then why do the enraged people linger here as if awaiting a victim on which to vent their wrath, and now, conscious of my approach, burst forth into fresh excess of rage?"

"Some there may be who wish you ill, oh Queen, but the multitude, mindful of your sorrow, think of you only with tenderness. But lest some danger threaten you, I will go forward and ascertain the cause of this new outbreak."



"No, no, you shall not leave me, lest going I never see you more," the Queen screamed in a tremour of apprehension, thinking of the attendants who had so shamelessly abandoned her a little while before.

Discerning the cause of her fear, he desisted, seeing which, she threw her arms about his neck, sobbing:

"You, Medius, will be true though all others abandon me," she pleaded, stroking his face with trembling hands.

"My life, oh Queen, is yours to do with as you please," he replied, deeply stirred by her distress.

"Your Queen, so powerful yesterday, so poor today, can only thank you for your fidelity," she lamented. "But whither can we go?" she went on, looking about her; "for if I but show myself the friends of Alexander will tear me to pieces."

"No, gracious Queen, the people bear you no ill-will, but should they seek to molest you, the King's guard awaits you at the entrance to escort you to the palace."

While they were thus discussing the possible danger that threatened, and Medius and Eurydice were striving to allay the apprehension of the Queen, Jaron, who had left the little group to ascertain the situation without, now returned, announcing with cheerful voice:

"There is nothing you need fear, oh Queen, for the people think not at all of you, but expend their wrath in another and quite harmless direction."

"Do you speak true, Jaron, or are your words intended only to calm my fears?" the Queen questioned, appealing to him.

"I call the gods to witness the truth of all I say."

Assured of his sincerity, all her pride forgotten, she said:

"Forgive my questioning, good leech, but my poor mind, broken by Philip's death, no longer responds to reason or the sane things of life. But hark!" she motioned, starting back as the noise without suddenly redoubled in violence. "What means that awful cry of vengeance and undying hate?"

"'Tis nothing, as I say, oh Queen, that in any way threatens you," Jaron affirmed; "but let us hasten to leave this trap in which Philip was betrayed and to which the populace, responding to some idle suggestion, may at any moment apply the torch."

Affrighted at this new danger, bewildered, not knowing what to do, the poor Queen, urged on by those about her, made her way to the covered portico upon which the outer door opened. There, at her feet, the King's guard, crowded back upon itself by the noisy populace, formed a half-circle, facing outward, horse to horse, the long lances of

the riders protruding threateningly in front. The tumultuous gathering, however, it was quickly apparent, concerned itself not at all with the royal theatre or those it covered, but was intent on something far different and of more immediate interest, though what it was those who gazed were unable to discover. To the east and west, as far as the eye could reach, the wide avenue on which the building faced was filled with a surging crowd, every face fixed intently upon the space to one side, where an ancient temple had once stood. There, beside the crumbling ruin, amid converging paths, men worked with the desperation of life, while the multitude, held back as by some invisible hand, made itself hoarse with impatient cries of rage and hate. Of the cause of the outburst and the purpose of those who worked, however, neither the Queen nor those about her could make out, as they stood irresolute on the narrow platform watching the tumultuous throng. Of them the excited crowd, however, took no notice, save a few who, crowded back upon the lances of the guard, turned about in anger with savage imprecations on the offending soldiers. Far and near the attention of all was fixed with eager expectancy on the ruins of the ancient temple and those who laboured there.

Scattered throughout the vast gathering and as if to give it greater import, the flash of spears showed that numbers of the King's soldiers had escaped the



THE FATE OF PAUSANIAS



discipline of the camp to join the angry crowd. Clustered nere and there, and giving the surging mass a sinister aspect, were groups of barbarians from the surrounding nations, come to Edessa in all the panoply of war to attend upon their chiefs in Philip's honour. Sturdy Gauls, with hands on swords, looking on, still and impassive; Dardanians, whose ancestors had fought under Priam at the Siege of Troy, watched and waited unmoved; Illyrian warriors, ancient and bitter enemies of Macedonia, now for the moment at peace with their hated foe! These and barbarians like them stood watching the enraged populace with stolid countenances, taking no part whatever in the angry tumult.

At last, as the cries grew more menacing and it seemed no longer possible to withhold the furious multitude, those who formed around the busy workmen, gave a shout of exultation, and presently there rose to view a rude and cumbrous cross, and on it the mangled form of Pausanias, Philip's murderer! Wearied with reviling and maltreating the body of the miserable assassin, the populace had at last conceived the thought of crucifying it, the customary form of executing criminals in Macedonia. At sight of the hideous object the multitude was for a moment stilled, as if excess of passion had left it speechless; but the tension quickly relaxing, the tumult broke forth afresh with a mighty roar of

execration. As the cross was firmly fixed in the ground those close at hand lashed the impassive figure nailed thereon with whatever object they could lay their hands upon, others farther away contenting themselves with curses and cries of savage hate.

At sight of the hideous spectacle, the Queen, who had such cause to hate the memory of the wretch who had deprived her at once of husband and throne, covered her face to shut out the horrid object. Nor were those about her unmoved at the pitiful sight, for the gorgeous uniform of the royal guards, in which the assassin had been clothed, was torn to shreds, revealing the body pierced with a thousand wounds, and so broken and battered that it seemed no longer to possess the semblance of a man. But strangely, and as if the populace had purposely refrained from destroying the identity of the wretch they hated, the face was without disfigurement; and now, as it projected itself forward, ghastly white, it seemed to stare across the way in deadly menace at the frightened Queen as she raised her eyes to the horrid spectacle. Such was the unhappy fate of the wretch, Pausanias; but on the following day, Olympias, hearing of the indignity offered his body, directed its removal from the cross and the erection of a sumptuous funeral pyre, on which she caused the mangled remains to be burned. And as if this were not enough to show her sym-

pathy, and hatred of Philip, she proclaimed that the day should forever afterward be commemorated with games and sacrifices to the gods.

"'Tis like the savage woman—but what matter!—the wretch is dead and Alexander King!" the populace whispered among themselves as they watched the removal of the body from the cross, and going their way prayed the gods that the vengeful Queen might find no more hurtful way of satiating her savage hunger.

While the guard of Medius waited before the door of the theatre, fretting and foaming, unable to clear a way for the Queen, the shrill sound of a bugle was heard from the direction of the plain beyond the city; and being repeated again and again, the mob, apprehensive of its purport, sought safety in instant flight. But all too late, for while the bugle rang, a regiment of Thessalian mercenaries came on at a furious gallop, and reaching the outskirts of the tumultuous gathering, rode down such as were in the way, cutting and slashing with naked sword all within their reach. In this way and with brutal violence, the vast concourse was dispersed, some of the fugitives returning as the soldiers sped on, to carry off their fallen comrades. As the charging squadron reached the theatre, Lyncestes, their commander, seeing the Queen and those about her, detached himself from his companions, and reining in his horse, sprang to the ground.



Approaching the waiting group and seeming not to see the affrighted Queen, he turned to Eurydice, smiling, as he doffed his glistening helmet:

"There is no further cause to fear, sweet Princess, for happily I come in time both to save and serve you."

Thinking he had not seen the Queen, Eurydice said with gentle voice:

"I am here, as you see, under protection of the Queen, and so have no cause to fear."

"The Queen?" he queried, looking about superciliously. "I know not of whom you speak."

Hearing him, the Princess, surprised and enraged at his insolence, lifted the hand of the unoffending Queen to her lips, saying with scornful emphasis:

"If you, who are seemingly so high in favour know not the Queen, then 'tis not fit that you should know those who attend upon her august person," and turning her back on the haughty nobleman, she would neither see nor speak with him further.

"Bravo! I like your spirit, Princess, but 'twill avail nothing, for the King will thank me later for rescuing you from so awkward a situation," Lyncestes proclaimed, putting the bugle to his lips to call back the soldiers, who were still within hearing.

Enraged at his insolence, Medius advanced, exclaiming with sober voice:

"I am here, Prince, at the King's express command, to guard the Queen and those in attendance upon her person, and so empowered, I excuse you from interference in the matter."

"And do you call these trembling soldiers standing dumb and powerless before the mob fit protection for Princess or Queen? The King owes you no thanks, for had my arrival been less timely, those you seek to guard would have been trodden to death beneath the feet of the angry populace."

"The rage of the people was not directed toward the Queen nor those about her, but to the assassin, once your confederate, who has now paid his debt for the treason you nurtured and left him to execute," Medius reproved. "Call off your troops," he went on, his temper flaming, "for both your presence and speech are an offence against decency and good manners!"

"You rave, child, for I come at the instance of Antipater, the King's lieutenant, and so commanded will remain to guard those in danger."

"No danger threatens, and had Antipater known the cause of the disturbance he would not have intervened to stay the just wrath of the populace," Medius explained, stilling his anger.

"'Tis Antipater's way to act, and investigate afterward," Lyncestes laughed.

"And rightly where the State is threatened, but these people meant no harm to any one, and deserved not to be thus cowardly butchered."

"'Tis good physic, and timely," Lyncestes disdainfully replied, "for once the populace is permitted a free hand in such matters it will quickly seek some other and more harmful means of showing its power."

"Such reasoning is unworthy men of courage and a disgrace to the King, whose advent has this day been so gloriously welcomed by these very people!" Medius reproved.

"It matters not; collect your men and withdraw, for I am here to look to the safety of the Princess and those accompanying her."

Hearing him, Cleopatra, clasping Medius' hand, cried out:

"And I, your Queen, command you to fulfill the King's behest—no, you shall not leave me unprotected with this plotter and assassin!"

To this Lyncestes made no answer, save a laugh, at which the Queen, in her rage, cried out:

"Is this the protection Alexander affords his father's wife and honoured Queen, of which you but now assured me?" she rebuked, turning to Medius.

"The King knows nothing of the acts of this panderer of men, oh Queen, nor dreams of his presence here, or this unseemly abuse of Antipater's power," Medius comforted, and turning upon Lyncestes with menacing gesture, exclaimed, "Take yourself off, or by the gods I will find a way all my

own to protect those entrusted to my guardianship!"

"Fie, you upstart, scarce a day at court, would you question the privilege of the governour? Begone, his orders alone shall guide me," saying which he sought to grasp the hand of Eurydice to lead her away. Thrusting him aside, Medius motioned her to retire with the Queen within the building, crying out as he faced Lyncestes:

"Stand back, murderer and consorter of assassins, or by the gods I will teach you the respect due to Philip's Queen and those who seek protection near her person!"

At this Lyncestes, white with rage, drew his sword and rushing upon Medius, would have run him through had not an attendant guard caught the blade on his projecting spear.

In this way the unseemly conflict was precipitated, but it had its origin on Lyncestes' part in something far different from what appeared. For having long recognized Medius as the favoured lover of Eurydice, and his passions being heated to the highest pitch thereby, he only waited opportunity to give them fit expression.

Affrighted, the Queen and Eurydice sought refuge within the theatre, leaving the rivals to fight it out in full view of the gaping soldiers. But the conflict was of only momentary interest or duration, for Medius, more alert than his opponent,

whose idle and dissipated life had weakened his arm, quickly disarmed his implacable enemy. Defenseless and hemmed in by the angry guard, Lyncestes, humiliated and trembling, stood still awaiting the expected stroke, but Medius disdainingly to kill him, struck him across the face with the flat of his sword, exclaiming:

"Murderer! I pardon you as the King has pardoned! Begone! Go hide thyself from the sight of men!" and putting up his weapon he sought the Queen, and taking her hand and that of Eurydice, led them to a closed chair that waited near at hand.

Thus it fell out that the unhappy Queen, who but a few hours before had been escorted to the theatre amid the cheers of the multitude, returned to her palace unnoticed and unhonoured. Looking out from her humble conveyance, tears burst from her eyes as they sought the tree-covered mountains now filled with deepening shadows, sombre harbingers of what was before her. Nor could Eurydice, silently weeping by her side, do more than hold her hand as she recalled all that had passed and what it presaged for her unhappy mistress.

## CHAPTER XI

### GUARDING THE PRINCE CERANUS

THE day of Philip's assassination and Alexander's enthronement, as already recounted, was one of wild excitement and strange happenings to the lovesick Theba. In the past for her to dream of the fair-haired Prince, to indulge in vain imaginings concerning him, to see him from afar, had been her sole happiness. While his name was never mentioned in the palace of Cleopatra except with hatred or derision, yet to hear it at all was ever a delight to the forlorn maid; such is the strange inconsistency of love. During his long exile, she had in her sorrow sought out slaves of his companions, that she might by subtle questioning gain some word of his doings. Thus she had followed him in all his wanderings; in his escape from the trap set by the King's soldiers at Parclede's hut on the night of his flight from Pella; in the visit he paid the ancient shrine of Dodona; of his brief stay in Epirus and flight thence to the wilds of Illyria. Afterward the returning soldiers had told her of his timely arrival on the field in the desperate battle between Philip's army and the Illyrian forces. When he returned from exile she had stood throughout the night beside the road that she might

feast her eyes on his face as he passed with the King, clad throughout in glistening armour. It was indeed a glorious sight and well repaid the long vigil, and for days thereafter formed her sole subject of thought.

Of near approach to him, of being able to touch his garments or hear his voice, of such things she had never dreamed, content if she might see him as he rode forth, or hear his name mentioned with praise or gross disparagement, it mattered not.

Now, on this day of his succession to the throne, all unexpected and by the merest chance, she had been near him, had pressed his cloak to her lips, and proclaimed him King as he knelt beside his dying father. Afterward she had heard his words of pardon for the grieving shepherd; and then again, such was her happy chance, she had been near to proffer him the cup of wine; and, blessed thought, had she not the treasured vessel from which he drank, and might, as often she would, draw it from her bosom and press her lips where his had been! That it should have fallen to her lot to become acquainted with the Thracian plot; to carry him word thereof; to be privileged to speak with him face to face; to have him look upon her; address her as if she were something beside a slave—that, indeed, was the crowning of all that had gone before! And as she traversed the lonely path on her return to Edessa, overjoyed at her good for-

tune, she repeated, over and over, his every word; told herself, again and again, how he looked, the smile that for a moment lighted his stern countenance; named one by one his every adornment; yea, called up anew, as if his steed were hers, the trappings of the noble horse he rode. And the gallant men beside him, surely they were fit companions for a King, and with them about him no assassin could do him harm! In this manner, she communed with herself as she drew rein at the palace, where the Princess Eurydice, her mistress, lived in attendance upon Cleopatra, the Queen. This princely abode, uncared for and greatly fallen into disrepair since the removal of the capital to Pella, was the most sumptuous of the ancient palaces at Edessa, save that now occupied by the Monarch himself. It stood apart in a spacious park, as it had for centuries, near the King's place of residence, separated from the latter by an old and crumbling wall. In distinguishment of it from all other residences, and particularly those of his lesser wives, Philip had caused it to be known and spoken of as "The Palace."

In the exclusion of the Queen and minor wives from his own abode, Philip had profited by the varied and oftentimes startling experiences of his predecessors on the throne. These had been emphasized and confirmed in his own life, but more especially in the case of the jealous and half-savage



Olympias. This separate housing of his wives, he had found greatly conducive to his personal comfort and freedom from domestic strife, the latter a thing impossible to avoid or ameliorate in any other way where so many claimed his favour.

Of the number of Philip's wives the world of his day was ignorant, as are we, and as he was himself; for he was freehanded in such matters, according to the polygamous customs of the Macedonian Kings. And being a Prince of robust appetite and varied fancy, and withal much given to the society of women in his hours of leisure, he availed himself of his kingly prerogative without any regard to the number or character of his wives. In this he was thought to be lacking in the great wisdom he evinced in other things, for many of his wives were of an intriguing nature, and all of them, without exception, discontented and unhappy. Because of this, it fell out that their plottings and strivings oftentimes involved the Kingdom in confusion, and more than once had brought it to the verge of civil war—ending, as we have seen, in the tragic death of Philip himself. This great prolixity in the matter of wives, early and late, gave the frugal Greeks, who were no way friendly to him, just and lasting cause of offence. Having lost much of their former robustness in laudable strivings after the ideals of life, they now esteemed such grossness on Philip's part the rankest gluttony. Because of this, the

versatile and witty Greeks said many unkind things of him, which, coming to his ears, would have caused a more sensitive monarch much concern, but in Philip's case they disturbed him not at all. For he boasted, not thinking excuse necessary, that kings, like other virile animals of rare type, were gregarious and given to loving indiscriminately—but not necessarily in equal degree, he took pains to point out! And because of this discrimination he claimed to justify himself before his critics, or, what was to him of vastly greater moment, before his many wives.

Of these things Theba perhaps gave some thought as she entered the courtyard of the palace, on her return late in the afternoon, after warning Alexander of the Thracian plot, but they were matters that concerned her only as they affected her mistress, Eurydice, to whom she now hurried to make excuse for her prolonged absence. But upon entering the palace she found to her great alarm that neither the Princess nor the Queen had returned from the theatre, though many hours had passed since the King's death. Greatly disturbed, for rumours of every kind filled the air, she would have hastened to the theatre to seek her mistress had not her intention been diverted as soon as formed by other and more pressing duties. For within the palace all was disorder, the officers and women of the court who should have been in at-

tendance upon the young Prince, Ceranus, having shamelessly abandoned him on news of the King's death, as others, as already recounted, had abandoned his unfortunate mother. The slaves, left to themselves, she found wandering aimlessly about, and thinking not at all of the Prince or his safety; so that relinquishing for the present all thought of seeking her mistress, Theba at once busied herself bringing order out of the wild confusion that reigned throughout the palace.

While she was thus engaged, Demetrius, the love-lorn page whom we have seen in the train of Alexander, and whom the latter had directed to follow and guard the maid in her lonely flight across the plain, entered the palace, and seeking her out, asked abruptly, doffing his plumed hat:

"What further service, mistress, can I render you?"

And this with much embarrassment of manner and hesitancy of speech, to the youth's great mortification; for in truth he had spent the better part of the afternoon conning over the many pretty things he was going to say to his love on being admitted to her presence. But now on meeting her face to face, he, the beau of the army and thought to be overforward with the maidens of the court, could scarcely find breath to ask this blunt and foolish question!

Hearing him, Theba, who had no knowledge that he had followed her across the desert, but recognizing his rank, fell to blushing, not knowing what to make of his abrupt question. And his intrusion was the more strange to her, for the pages in attendance upon the Monarch—or, as we would term them, his aides-de-camp—were a body of young gentlemen selected from the noblest families of the land, the preferment carrying with it, rank and privileges of the highest order. What, then, could he mean by so unaccountable a question, she asked herself, abashed. However, as he seemed not to intend offence and remained silent, gazing into her face with embarrassed air, she asked:

“Are you the bearer of a message from the Princess?”

“No, mistress, I come from the King.”

“From the King!” she stared, her face flaming.

“Yes,” he smiled, appearing not to notice her confusion.

“Oh, you have mistaken me for another—for an attendant of the Queen,” she said, relieved.

“No, ’tis to you I come, to you, gentle,” he said, gaining courage.

“For what purpose, if indeed you speak true?” she questioned, striving to maintain her composure.

“To guard your person.”

“Me! Theba—the Princess’ slave?”

"Yes, such was his express command—and 'twas an order much to my liking, fairest."

"To your liking?" she repeated absently, striving to comprehend the strange situation.

"Yes, because it favours something I have long looked forward to," he stammered. "For you must know, gentle," he went on when she made no reply, "that I have sought excuse for a year to speak to you."

"Has the King returned to Edessa?" she choked, arousing herself, inattentive to his words.

"No, he is still on the way, for he travels less hurriedly than you, and by a more roundabout way."

"And you followed me—at—his command?"

"Yes—and I would have done as much of my own accord had I been so privileged. And now, having told you all and foundered my horse and lost my slave and ruined my cloak in the mad race, may I kiss your hand for being so favoured?" he asked without semblance of forwardness.

"You, a Prince, kiss my hand—the hand of a—slave!" she exclaimed, bewildered, displaying the band of gold that clasped her neck.

"Yes—that I may be sure you trust me—if I must find excuse for the favour."

"That I trust you?"

"Yes."

"Are you not in the King's favour?"

"I am here—could there be better evidence?"

"And are you always near him?" she asked abruptly, as if no favour in the world could be so great as that.

"I sleep beside his bed."

"That is indeed to be trusted."

"And sit at his table when he dines."

"And so both guard and entertain him?"

"The first yes—but not the last, simple," he smiled.

"And is that all?" she asked, the music of the King's name sounding sweet in her ears.

"Yes, unless it be that I command his pages, which is thought to be something; for they are a striving lot of beggars, and live only in the hope of gaining favour in his eyes."

"And when I rode away, the King—not some one else—not Hephestion—told you to follow me?"

"Yes; and this I did gladly. And—may I kiss your hand, fairest?" he asked, with serious countenance, as if she might now be inclined to accord him the favour.

"No," she laughed, enraptured, overcome by the King's kindness. "Not my hand," and clasping the youth's blushing face, the love-sick maiden kissed him on both his cheeks. "Now tell me your name," she said, eager to hear more of the King.

"I am Demetrius—the son of Antigonus," the youth stammered, overcome by the unexpected favour.

"And his confidant?" she smiled, the intimacy of father and son being a matter of common knowledge then as in after years.

"Yes, beautiful, and now—" But what more he would have said we shall never know, for at that moment the terrified cries of the slaves who loitered in the great court at the entrance to the palace, caused her to leave him abruptly to ascertain the occasion of the uproar. And to her great surprise and alarm, she learned that a band of Epirot soldiers heavily armed were at the gate demanding instant admission to the palace. Recognizing them as the escort Olympias had brought with her from Epirus, their unexpected appearance excited the gravest fears in the breast of the young maid, for their savagery and indifference to aught in life save their mistress' word of command was a matter of comment about the capital. Distrusting their presence, she bade an attendant inquire their errand, upon which the officer in command replied that they were sent in the King's name to guard the Prince, Ceranus. Doubting the truthfulness of this, knowing Alexander to be absent, yet fearful of giving offence to Olympias, Theba knew not what to do or say, further than to send word to the attendants to deny them present entrance.

"Think you the King sent them?" she questioned, hastening to Demetrius, fearing for the life of Ceranus once these ruthless soldiers gained access

to his person, and yet knowing how little they would regard the frail defenses of the palace if denied admission.

"No, he knows nothing of their coming."

"Yet he might have signalled some word to that effect?"

"No, he has but one thought—to secure the crown without civil war or division of the people."

"If only he were here!" she murmured.

"His coming cannot be long delayed, for he rides fast, anxious to know how his accession is received by the mountain districts," he answered, though, as already recounted, the King did not reach Edessa until late at night, being delayed by the encounter with the Thracian band.

"Hark, the officer, angered at the delay, clamours for instant admission," she cried, not knowing what to do.

"Would they not recognize me, an officer in attendance upon the King, and so respect my word, if I bade them depart, think you?" Demetrius said, angered that he could do nothing to aid his love in her great distress.

"No! They are sent by Olympias and are her creatures and will obey no other save the King."

"Then let me arm the slaves and attendants and repel force with force," he urged.

"The slaves would not risk their lives in such encounter, and why should they, poor things. No,



we are lost—unless,” she hesitated, eying him curiously.

“Unless what, sweetheart?”

“Oh, ’twas only a thought—a silly thought.”

“Tell me what it was; in you, dearest, it might be something wise.”

“I thought—”

“Yes, pretty, you thought!”

“That you might—but no, ’tis too absurd.”

“What’s absurd? Out with it, baby, nor hesitate, for time passes, and the gate is weak,” he commanded, alarmed at the noise without.

“I thought perhaps—that you might—personate—the—King—he being away—but it’s too foolish.”

“Why foolish? I have his height, and my face is not much different, and my hair tumbles about my shoulders like his,” he went on, scanning his features in a disk that hung on the wall.

“But no one could mistake another for the King!” she coloured. “He has such majesty and—and—”

“Majesty! Fudge! Not more than I were I that way inclined,” he retorted, straightening to his full height; and truly he was one to invite respect, his bearing being that of a soldier, and his features marked and of commanding character. “Nor will this Epirot officer know the difference,” he went on as she shook her head, “or if he should suspect or cry out I’ll kill him on the spot, and so prove my

title to his followers," he laughed, as if the act would not be at all distasteful to him.

"But your dress? He will see that it is not the King's."

"Not if I don the King's head-gear," he cried, pointing to the hat of Philip, which rested upon a table, where the unfortunate Monarch had that morning left it. And in this the youth showed great shrewdness, for the King's hat, or *kausia*, as it was called, was of peculiar fashion, made of soft woollen cloth, with wide upturned brim, the whole surmounted by waving ostrich feathers, and of such restrictive use that no one but the King or heir to the throne might wear it under pain of death.

"See, my head and frowzled hair fill it as if it were my own," Demetrius said, grinning, placing the hat on his head, "and with this nothing more is needed, for my cloak and sword do not differ from the King's. For you see, gentle," he laughed, in explanation, "'twas Philip's fancy to regard us as a part of his family, young nobles, he was wont to say, that he was training to become his councilors and commanders."

"You have a little, a little, the air of the King," Theba commented, loth to accord the noble youth even this degree of comparison with Alexander, though he was in truth of princely grace and bearing.

"So much the air and voice that the rogue will never know the difference. Come, dainty, what am I to do?"

"Threaten him—bid him withdraw—tell him you are the King—storm—rage—anything so that he departs, for his presence means death to the young Prince, Ceranus," she explained.

"Good; what you ask will be easy! Adieu, fairest," he saluted with princely air, doffing the King's hat.

"Yes, the Epirot savage will never suspect," she laughed, overjoyed at the hope held out of escaping the visit of the threatening soldiers. "And—and you may kiss my hand, if you wish," she said, blushing.

"May the gods abandon me if I fail after such sweet favour!" he cried, as he pressed her hand to his lips.

"You must not—can not fail, for Ceranus' life depends on you."

"I'll not fail, sweetheart, and if I succeed—for I may have to kill the savage—will you let me kiss your—hand?" he stammered, hot blushes evincing his love for the gentle being.

"Yes, yes, but hasten," she urged, as the Epirot officer, impatient at the delay, struck the closed gate with his spear.

Doing as he was bid, and attended by such of the lackeys about the palace as wore the King's livery,

Demetrius commanded the gate to be thrown open, and upon the order being obeyed, faced the Epirot officer with threatening visage, demanding in a voice heard within the palace:

"What impudent purpose brings you here, seeking to interpret the King's office in the protection of those entrusted to his care? Quick, your answer!" he thundered, as the officer hesitated and drew back. "Speak! I, Alexander the King, command you!"

"You—the King—and in Edessa?" the Molossian gasped, his face ashy white.

"What! Are you so little acquainted with the court that the King's face is unknown to you?" Demetrius sternly rebuked, half drawing his sword.

"I crave your mercy, oh King—being a stranger in the country," the officer excused, falling on his knees, as was the custom of his people when offence was given the Epirot sovereign by a subject.

"'Tis well, and because of your ignorance I pardon you. But do not loiter; hasten to my august mother and apprise her of my presence and the Prince's safety," and with that, fearful some passer-by might detect the ruse, Demetrius turned his back on the officer and bade the attendant close the gate.

In this way the Prince was rescued from the deadly peril that threatened him, for Olympias' order to the Epirot officer was to put him to death once he gained access to his person.

Re-entering the palace, Theba threw her arms about Demetrius' neck, crying out, enraptured:

"'Twas finely done, Demetrius, almost like the King, and for it thou shalt always be my friend."

"Your friend?" he scorned, turning away.

"Nay, I would have said brother, had I dared," she corrected.

"There's no difference between the two, innocence—and I thought you might regard me as something else," he sighed, disconcerted.

"No, no, never, never!"

"I'll wait a year—all my life if need be for you to love me differently," he pleaded.

"No, 'twill always be the same," she blushed.

"But you shall—I swear it," he cried in a passion—"but being a brother," he went on, presently, striving to smile, "I may kiss you when I like?" and bending over, pressed his lips to hers.

"No, 'twould be unseemly, and avail nothing," she objected. "But hark! 'Tis the Queen and Princess returning. Come, let us hasten to them that you may receive their thanks—and a kiss if you wish, for they will not think it too big a price to pay for what you did," she laughed, and grasping his hand they ran to meet the Queen and Theba's indulgent mistress, to whom they related all that had occurred.

## CHAPTER XII

### LYNCESTES SEEKS THE AID OF OLYMPIAS

FOLLOWING his unhappy encounter with Medius at the door of the theatre, Lyncestes, angered and humiliated, cursed himself for his folly in precipitating the conflict and exposing himself thereby to the scorn of Eurydice and the contempt of the gaping crowd. He, a Prince, whose royal descent reached back a thousand years! He who had hoped out of the turmoil consequent upon the King's death to find a way to grasp the regal sceptre, to be thus flouted! For Olympias, hazarding all, had promised her abettors in the murder of Philip whatever they most craved in life, seeming to have no thought of Alexander's preferment or aught except to avenge herself on the man who had discarded her. Nor were Lyncestes' hopes of preferment altogether vain, for his ancestors had once ruled Lyncestia; and the Macedonian crown, if now diverted from the Dorian line, would fall to him who was the strongest. And might he not, as the husband of Antipater's daughter, hope to count on the aid of that resourceful nobleman in the accomplishment of his ambitious purpose? But once King, he promised himself, this lowly, hateful marriage, born of his necessities, he would quickly put aside, choosing thereafter as suited his fancy. °

Now all his hopes had fallen to the ground, nor was the favour of the King a thing to build upon, being due to his abandonment of the conspiracy or, more likely, in recognition of the long and faithful service of Antipater, Philip's civil governor. Unstable himself, Lyncestes distrusted the professions of the King; his life-long dislike of Alexander being intensified by the pardon so freely accorded him by the generous Monarch. Cleopatra, too, whose royal husband he had so cruelly conspired to murder, he loathed, and now, mingled with the passion he had felt for the Princess Eurydice, there was a bitter desire to humiliate and degrade her before the world.

Thinking thus, he bade his soldiers return to camp, and mounting his horse set out to seek Olympias, hoping through her hatreds to avenge himself on those who had so grievously offended him. Hurrying on, he gave no thought to the beauty of the surroundings, and yet there was much to note and admire however preoccupied the wayfarer might be. For the old kings of Macedonia who had made their home for hundreds of years in this fastness of the mountain, loving the forces of nature more than the sculptured figures and ornate architecture of cultured Greece, had sought to make Edessa the glory of the north. And in this praiseworthy undertaking the wooded heights and picturesque valley, watered by the mountain torrent had

been made to bear a part. The crystal river as it broke in tumbling cascades at the base of the mountain cliff, the provident kings had deftly divided into innumerable streams, which they guided beside the tree-grown avenues, or ran hither and thither, fertilizing the private gardens of the citizens. And in adornment of the city, bubbling fountains and miniature cascades graced the public parks, while amid the quiet glades and stately trees of the King's garden, the abundant supply was made to feed the lakes and slumbering lagoons that further adorned the Monarch's extensive pleasure grounds. And today, as in Alexander's time, the meandering stream still finds its way through the circling valley, serving to cool the summer air and irrigate the vineyards and fruitful grounds that mark the site of the ancient capital.

Of the sylvan beauty Lyncestes saw nothing, but following an obscure path that hugged the mountain-side, made his way in all haste to the ancient citadel that seemed to hang suspended in the ambient air above the time-worn city. Nor dared the aspiring nobleman appear more openly on the public streets, for by some subtle instinct the multitude already associated him with the murder of the old King, their suspicions finding expression in mutterings and subdued cries whenever he showed himself. And now, as he hurried on, the slaves toiling in the vine-clad gardens beside the path he traversed



stared at him askance or nodded their heads in knowing consciousness.

Climbing the sunken road beside the noisy cataract, he reached the moss-grown citadel, and without loss of time sought the presence of the Queen, Olympias. Gaining access to her presence with difficulty, she did not speak as he approached, but held him in her eye as if, now that he was no longer useful to her, she wished him dead. He had betrayed Philip and so he would Alexander when chance offered, and thinking thus, she coldly meditated his death, seeking only a way to its accomplishment. And so the wily courtier interpreted her sinister look, but feigning otherwise, approached her person, and kneeling humbly kissed her hand.

"What mischief brings you here ere Alexander is fairly seated on the throne, or I have opportunity to press him to my heart?" she coldly questioned.

"My duty to the King performed, I hasten to pay you homage, oh Queen, and doing so express my deep devotion and that of my people on your accession anew to power and influence in the State."

"Tut! Tut! Reserve such empty phrases for younger ears, for to me they have no meaning," she scoffed.

"The gods witness the truth—"

"Come, what is it that brings you here?" she interrupted with contemptuous voice.

"I come, oh Queen, in excess of love and devotion, having naught to conceal, nor favour of any kind to ask," he protested, his face aflame with shame.

"If that be all, your errand fulfilled, you have my permission to withdraw," she said, turning away, unable to conceal her dislike.

"Will you not hear me, oh Queen? Is the offer of my sword nothing in these troublous times?" he pleaded, his face darkening at the cruel rebuff.

"What use have I, the Queen, Alexander's mother, for your sword?" she cried disdainfully.

"Only that you have need of a man with a strong arm, not nice about its use nor given to asking questions."

"What leads you to think that?" she answered, turning upon him.

"The presence of those who breathe the air of Macedonia, oh Queen, whom you would see dead or languishing in the dungeons beneath this castle," he responded bluntly.

"And if that be true?"

"You have need of me."

"Others will gladly do my bidding."

"But I will ask no questions—expect no reward."

"Expect no reward! Speak! what is the favour you seek?—for you perform no service without hope of pay. Out with it, nor occupy my time with foolish evasions!"

"I swear—"

"Fie, your oaths are but air and have no meaning more than the idle wind."

"Then must I find excuse ere you will trust me?"

"Nor will I trust you then, further than your interests lie. Quick! seek not to evade me lest tiring I dismiss you finally," she commanded.

"I would have thy favour, oh Queen, that I may punish my enemy and gain the woman I love," he answered, with ill-concealed rage.

"All men are your enemies because all justly distrust you; and of your love, the beast Philip had not so many favourites."

"Have you no mercy?"

"Mercy for you? No! Who is the woman that excites your brutal passions; that you dishonour with your preferment?"

"You are most cruel, oh Queen."

"I am most truthful, for I know you and remember your part in the past. Come, her name!"

"The Princess Eurydice, if you must know," he muttered, bending low to conceal his humiliation.

"The child-love of Medius?"

"If such a thing be called love."

"And she of royal lineage?"

"Am I not also of kingly birth?"

"What fiend directed your eyes to that unoffending maiden—and you already wed?"

"I know not, save 'tis so."

"What says she?"

"The close companion and confidant of Cleopatra, she scorns my advances."

"She is an attendant merely, not a companion or confidant of Cleopatra; and that but lately," Olympias reprimanded.

"She is all and more than I say, oh Queen, for when I offered but now to escort her here that she might pay dutiful homage to you, she replied with contemptuous scorn that Cleopatra was Queen and with her she would abide."

"Said she so, or are you but trying to deceive me?" the Queen questioned, her face darkening.

"I speak the truth, or may the gods forever abandon me!" he swore, holding up his hand.

"I mistrust you and all you say, but if what you aver be true she shall share the fate of the woman she serves in preference to Macedonia's rightful Queen."

"And the other?"

"Of whom do you speak?"

"Of Medius, her lover, who, when I sought to win the Princess from Cleopatra's following interfered in a tempest of passion, claiming the latter was still the Queen, and that as such Eurydice should serve her and her alone. And when I rebuked him for his insolence and lack of loyalty, he fell upon me with his sword and would have killed

me unawares had I not, suspecting treachery, evaded the stroke."

"Well—what came of it?"

"Nothing further, for afterward, supported by the soldiers that surrounded him, he bade the slaves who bore the chair of Cleopatra and Eurydice take up their burden and bear it to the palace."

"And the King, what says he to all this?"

"The King knows nothing, having gone to Pella where some dissension, it is rumoured, has sprung up regarding the succession."

"The King gone to Pella?" she exclaimed, astonished.

"Yes, I myself saw him depart."

"What you say is impossible," she disputed, eying him distrustfully.

"No, oh Queen, and you have but to ask to have the truth of what I say confirmed."

"My faithful Epirot who returned but a moment ago from the palace reports speaking with him there."

"It was not Alexander, but some impostor, if your officer speaks truly, for the King has not yet returned to the city."

"Such imposition is past belief, yet it must be so if what you say be true. But be it as it may, I have need of you and so accept your service, and if among the Lyncestian troops there are any that can be trusted, bring them hither to strengthen my

Epirot guard, for all others I dismissed an hour since. Now go," she commanded, "Harpalus will assign you quarters in the citadel, for I shall soon have occasion to test the fidelity of which you boast."



## CHAPTER XIII

### IN THE KING'S NAME

SEEKING the quarters assigned him by Harpalus in the citadel, Lyncestes, shunning companionship, sat alone, a skin of wine beside him, from which he drank deeply from time to time, intent upon drowning remembrance of his distressful fortune and the disappointments and humiliations of the day. Thus the afternoon passed and night advanced, his gaze fixed on the deserted streets of the moonlit city, a scowl of hate and discontent darkening his face. From this mood he was presently aroused by a messenger from Olympias, commanding his immediate presence. Sullenly resentful and far gone in intoxication, he lingered to empty the wine-skin, after which, a curse on his lips, he arose unsteadily to his feet and made his way to the presence of the implacable Queen. Scarce noticing his entrance, impatient of the delay, she lost no time in disclosing her purpose in sending for him, adding grimly as she curtly dismissed him:

"See that you do not fail in the execution of my plans—lest a fate like hers befall you."

Rendered reckless by the wine he had drunk and angered at the baseness of the duty assigned him, he took his leave without speech of any kind, and



marshalling the Epirot soldiers as directed by Olympias, led them by the rock-cut pass to the city below.

Halted by the night guard, it was sufficient that he was abroad under mandate of Queen Olympias and thus unhindered, he hurried forward with all speed, quickly reaching the palace of Cleopatra. Finding the gate closed and barred, he lost no time in idle summons, but placing ladders against the wall, gained admission to the court without interference of any kind. Taking possession of the secluded grounds, sentinels were placed at the various entrances of the royal building with such secrecy that their presence was unnoticed by all save Theba, who, having watched the King's return, now sat bemoaning her hapless love. Hearing the clang of armour without, and recalling the events of the afternoon, she ran to the entrance of the palace and peering forth discovered the presence of the Epirot soldiers. Hastening to Eurydice, she acquainted her with what was transpiring, and the latter, scarce waiting to hear the story, ran to the apartment of Cleopatra, who, worn with the events of the day, had long since retired for the night. Arousing her from the troubled sleep into which she had fallen, Eurydice told her of the presence of the Epirot soldiers; but of the purpose of their strange visit the frightened Queen could offer no explanation, and enfeebled and distraught, she burst

into a flood of tears, exclaiming in a paroxysm of fear that they were come to murder her as they had Philip. The attendants and slaves hearing her cry, and presently becoming acquainted with the presence of the half-savage soldiers and knowing their ruthless nature, ran hither and thither, panic-stricken, filling the palace with their distracted cries.

Meanwhile no word had been spoken by those in command of the assailing force, nor summons of any kind made for admission within the palace. When, however, the soldiers had been placed, and every avenue of escape securely guarded, the Epirot officer in command approached the entrance to the building, and striking it with his spear called on those within to open. No response being made by the affrighted inmates, the summons was presently repeated with still greater urgency, and this, too, being disregarded, the officer, angered and impatient, struck the door a thundering blow, crying out, so that all might hear:

"Open in the King's name!"

The attendants within the palace, frightened by this unusual and menacing summons, believing every one was to be put to death, ran to the Queen, and falling on their knees besought her to save them from Olympias' savage minions. Nor were their fears altogether foolish, for they had long been taught to believe by Cleopatra and her adherents

that Alexander was of a revengeful nature like his mother, and with passions so ferocious that any extreme might be expected of him once he were King. And now being King, what punishment indeed save death awaited those who had contributed to his banishment and the dangers that preceded it? Thus the attendants and slaves in their ignorant fright, thinking no one belonging to Cleopatra's household would be spared, felt all the apprehension of those who had been actively concerned in Alexander's unhappy exile and the attempt to deprive him of the crown.

In this moment of dire suspense and fear, Eurydice, urged on by Theba and acting in the Queen's name, sent word to the officer denying him admission to the palace and commanding him to depart with his troops. Upon this the officer, finding his demand refused, wasted no time in idle remonstrances, but searching out a heavy piece of timber and using it as a battering-ram, quickly broke open the closed door. Resistance being impossible, Eurydice hurried to the entrance and confronting the officer inquired, with such command of voice as her fright permitted, the cause of his untimely visit. But ere he could reply, Lyncestes, who had remained in the background, came forward with ostentatious show of gallantry, excited by the wine he had drunk, and doffing his helmet said:

"I come again as you see, fairest of the fair, to offer you the protection of my arms, and, this being assured, to perform another and a needed duty to the State."

"I require no protection unless it be from you and the creatures who accompany you," she responded, surprised and angered at his unexpected appearance.

"Why will you ever repulse my good offices, sweet Princess, the admiration of all men," he cried with drunken levity, "when I, your slave, have no thought but to serve you."

"Cease your ill-timed pleasantries and tell me what dire purpose brings you here at this unseasonable hour to affright the inmates of the palace and disturb the Queen's repose," she demanded, striving to hide her fears.

Stirred by her contemptuous tone, he responded:

"I come, heart of ice, if you will thus rudely interrogate me, repulsing all friendly overtures, to secure the person of Cleopatra, the so-called Queen of Macedonia."

"What offence has she committed—whom has she offended that such violence to her person is meditated?" Eurydice faltered, with blanched cheeks.

"It has come to the knowledge of those in authority," he laughed as if it were a pleasantry, "that she conspires to place her son Ceranus on the throne,

and, believing this, orders have been issued for her immediate arrest and imprisonment."

"There is no word of truth in such report, as every one knows, for the poor Queen, helpless and alone, dreams not of so disloyal an act, and only awaits opportunity to acknowledge her fealty and that of her son to Alexander, now proclaimed and rightfully the King."

"Antipater, the King's trusted governour, has positive proof of her treasonable purposes, and in protection of the rights of the Crown and the peace of the State has ordered her arrest and confinement," he proclaimed with mock assurance.

"In such a matter, affecting one of her exalted rank, the King and no other, however lofty of station, has authority to act, as you well know!" she expostulated.

"In his absence, all power is vested in the civil governour, and assured of the truthfulness of the report concerning Cleopatra, he has ordered her imprisonment," he answered curtly.

"But the matter is not urgent and may wait the King's return, when it can be explained and the untruthfulness of the accusation laid bare," she pleaded.

"My orders are imperative—to secure possession of the person of Cleopatra and bring her without delay to the citadel."

"To the citadel," Eurydice gasped, her fears for her mistress redoubled.

"Yes."

"Is not that Olympias' place of residence?"

"Yes, and thus you see she will have exalted company," he grinned.

"What honest purpose can there be in imprisoning one so defenseless within that isolated and half-dismantled castle?" Eurydice questioned with sinking heart.

"I know not; nor does it concern me."

"What better place can there be than this?" Eurydice asked, scanning the gloomy structure. "Surely you may guard her here, nor do so cruel and unnecessary a thing as to drag her forth in the middle of the night after the fatigue and melancholy events of the day."

"I can only execute my orders to convey her to the citadel, and while I stand loitering here I should have acted. Lead me to her instantly, or shall I seek her unattended?" he demanded, waving forward the Epirot guard.

"Nay, such abrupt action would kill her, already broken by the King's horrible death," Eurydice protested, all her courage gone. "Remain here if you still persist in your purpose while I apprise her of your coming and its import," and hurrying to the Queen she acquainted her with Lyncestes' presence and the object of his visit. Hearing her, the

distressed woman broke down anew, terrified at the frightful position in which she found herself. Incapable of thought, she sat staring at those about her as one paralyzed; seeing which, Theba, drawing Eurydice aside and neglectful of the gulf that separated their stations in life, exclaimed with vehement voice:

"Can you not see, Princess, that the Queen is powerless to act, scarce able to breathe, incapable of thought? Others must find a way if there be one to save her, for if they drag her forth she will not live to reach the citadel, or, reaching it, Olympias will quickly put her to death; her purpose can have no other ending."

"But Lyncestes will neither delay her going nor countenance appeal to the King."

"It does not matter—some way must be found."

"But how?"

To this direct appeal Theba made no response, seeming indeed not to hear, but with eyes fixed on vacancy remained as if in a trance. Thus she stood oblivious of the other's presence, deep in thought, and when Eurydice at last protested impatiently at the delay, she murmured as if in a dream:

"I am like the Queen in height and form!"

"Do not let such silly thoughts find expression at a moment like this," Eurydice chided, surprised and grieved.

"Nor is her bearing different from mine, though the consort of a King and I a wanderer in the streets!"

"For shame, Theba!"

"Only my voice would betray me to Lyncestes."

"If all you say be true, how will it avail our mistress?" the other asked, but less impatiently, as if discerning some hidden purpose back of Theba's words.

"This, oh Princess," Theba cried at last, aroused to life, "I will accompany Lyncestes—I will go in the Queen's place."

"You, child?"

"Yes; disguised in her cloak and hood, Lyncestes will never suspect the difference," she answered with firm assurance, thinking of Demetrius' cunning ruse, in personating the King.

"Would you dare do a thing so fraught with peril?" the other questioned, her face lighting at the hope the deception held out.

"There is no danger, only momentary imprisonment, for the King being apprised will instantly order my release."

"But the King is absent."

"No, he has returned to the city and if not at the regal palace, his presence there cannot long be delayed."

"But meanwhile Olympias, discovering the imposition, will instantly cause you to be put to death."



"What will it matter?" Theba sighed, turning away.

"Think you the order to imprison the Queen comes from the King?" Eurydice asked, fearing it might be so.

"No, he would not do a thing so brutal," Theba indignantly protested.

Influenced by the other's stronger will, and seeing no other way of evading Lyncestes' imperative demand, Eurydice was at last led to accept Theba's plan, and embracing the blushing maid exclaimed:

"Let it be as you say, child, and to your unselfish act the Queen will owe her life, for of Olympias' purpose to put her to death there can be no doubt. But if your plan should fail?" she said faltering, all her fears returning.

"Nothing will have been lost, and we will have gained the intervening time."

"But you?"

"Think not of me; 'tis the Queen we strive to save," Theba answered, unmoved.

Thus it was arranged, and saying nothing to Cleopatra, Eurydice hastened to wrap the gentle maid in the silken robe of the Queen, hiding her head and face within the hood that formed a part of the royal garment.

"There, child, no one would believe you other than what you seem, for you are in appearance the counterpart of the Queen," Eurydice whispered,

as she surveyed the lithe form and graceful carriage of the Bœotian maid.

Thus disguised, with Eurydice clinging to her hand, and followed by the trusted servants of the Queen, Theba, trembling and seemingly convulsed with grief, sought Lyncestes' presence.

"The Queen, on my urgent persuasion and trusting to the mercy and grace of her captors, yields obedience to the King's commands," Eurydice said with broken voice, kissing Theba's hand, as if in deference and affection.

"You have done well to abide the summons, however unwillingly, Cleopatra," he laughed, refusing his seemingly august prisoner the title due her station.

To this Theba made no response save a deep sob that seemed to fill her throat and choke all utterance; and thus, without speech and supported by a soldier on either side, she was conducted to the street, where a closed chair awaited her. Into this Lyncestes brutally thrust the unresisting prisoner, and bidding the bearers take up their burden, they at once set out on their return to the castle.

Reaching the citadel without incident of any kind, Lyncestes found Harpalus, attended by a guard bearing torches, awaiting him at the entrance to the forbidding structure. Glancing upward to the apartments occupied by Olympias, he saw the revengeful Queen peering forth, her hungry eyes

fixed with undying hatred on the person of her enemy. Reluctantly, and trembling with fear, Harpalus received the unwelcome prisoner, for, notwithstanding Olympias' promised protection, his mind was filled with apprehension as to the outcome of the high-handed act in which he was taking so prominent a part, when knowledge of it should finally come to the ears of the King. Conscious, however, of the Queen's watchful surveillance, he assumed an outward air of unconcern, and releasing Theba from the curtained chair, conducted her directly to the dungeons beneath the castle. Meantime, the deep silence the prisoner maintained excited his surprise, but attributing it to her despair and desperate resolve to exhibit a courageous bearing in the presence of her deadly enemy, he gave it no serious thought.

"The place is not inviting," he exclaimed, striving to turn it off with a light air as the Epirot guards busied themselves raising the great stone that closed the mouth of the pit, "but the lodging is secure, and no one can disturb a guest or have access to their person except through the King's contriving," he went on brokenly, deeply humiliated at the repellent duty and half-crazed with fear of the consequences to himself. But to all that was said or done the prisoner took no notice nor uttered remonstrance of any kind, seemingly animated in her course by an indomitable pride.

When at last the stone covering the entrance to the cell had been removed, disclosing the hideous pit beneath, Harpalus waited, expecting some word of protest from his exalted prisoner, but when she still remained silent, he reluctantly commanded the soldiers to lower her into the depths below; and this they hastened to do, their savage faces showing grim and unpitiful in the uncertain light of the flickering torches. Choking, scarce able to speak, Harpalus motioned the guard to close the opening, and, standing by, his face deadly pale, he impatiently awaited its accomplishment. When at last the stone was securely fixed in its place, he bade the guard remain until such time as they were relieved by others whom he would bring in person to the cell. With these directions he hastened away as if fleeing from an unknown peril, affrighted at the continued silence of the prisoner and the danger to himself if the King in his wrath, overriding the will of his mother, should finally condemn him for his part in the unauthorized and cruel murder.

Reaching the apartments of the Queen, he acquainted her with the accomplishment of his task, whereupon, turning to Lyncestes, who was present, she said, with unpitiful speech:

"You experienced so little difficulty, Prince, in securing the person of Cleopatra that I regret I did not order you to bring the child, Ceranus, as well. 'Tis proof that I am growing old," she

scowled. "But happily, 'tis an oversight that we can mend. And that no time may be lost, and the deed be accomplished ere the coming of the King," she went on, "you will return at once to the palace with my faithful Epirots, and forcing entrance, if need be, secure the person of the young Prince. Having done this, bring him hither with all haste, or, if that be impossible, smother the brat in his bed, but in such case use some circumspection, so that it may be told the populace that he died of a throat trouble."

"What if I meet with interference?" Lyncestes questioned with averted face.

"It matters not. My Epirots know only obedience and would kill the King himself with as little compunction as they would a strolling player if you command it. In securing possession of Ceranus, naught, you will understand, save the King's presence is to stay your hand. Use all haste, nor fail in the undertaking, for I would not have it said that I permitted mother or child a day's stretch of life, Philip being no longer here to protect them," she concluded grimly, and when Lyncestes hesitated and seemed reluctant to obey her order, she went on with imperious voice: "Grave reasons of State, if you must know, demand Ceranus' death, and Alexander himself has sanctioned the order of the council to that effect, but tomorrow, when his enthronement is assured, he

will pardon the child, for a puling maid is not more weak than he when opposition to his will vanishes and the offender appears before him as a suppliant," she explained, shame-faced, thinking the King's weakness a crime.

"I like not to meddle in the business, oh Queen, without express authority from the King," Lyncestes still protested.

"What! Having murdered the father, you shrink from putting the son to death?" she raged. "Away with you, and let not the rising sun look down upon the child alive. Or stay," she went on, noticing Lyncestes' stubborn reluctance, "while I give you written warrant if you fear to act on my simple word," and going to a secretary she hastily wrote the order, signing it Olympias, Queen, bidding the bearer secure possession of the Prince, Ceranus, dead or alive. Giving this to Lyncestes, she dismissed him with the air of one who held the lives of all who offended in her keeping—as she did in fact for the moment. Turning now to Harpalus, who stood looking on with pale and agitated countenance, she commanded: "It is necessary you should act with dispatch in putting Cleopatra to death, lest the King return and be led to weakly interfere. Lose no time, therefore, in flooding the cell, but not to the last extremity, so that if, perchance, the child is brought within the hour his mother may receive him in her arms! Now go—

but why so white of face?" she jeered, regarding him contemptuously. "Nay, rogue, you tremble! Why, you have no heart—you whom Philip banished for petty stealings and whom Alexander treasures, believing, deluded King, that you joined him in his exile, because of your great love. For shame, do as I bid you, and of your pilferings I will keep silent," she cried with sinister gesture, waving him from the room.

Thus the revengeful Queen planned, no thought of mercy entering her savage heart. Strange transformation! For as a maid she had loved and won Philip's heart by her gentle beauty and innocent grace. Afterward, with neglect and abandonment, the high-spirited woman lost her youthful charm until at last, we find her coldly planning his murder, and later the destruction of all in any way identified with his fortunes. And in the far-off future we shall behold her putting to death whole hecatombs of men, lost in revengeful broodings and the exercise of power gained under the magic of Alexander's name! This, until deserted by every one, the frightened populace, congregating in a body, shall seek her out in her abandonment and put her to death, as they would a savage animal. Such was the life of Olympias and its evolution from a trusting maid to a monster of cruelty, at mention of whose name men shuddered at remembrance of her deeds.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MEETING IN THE KING'S GARDEN

GRIEVING over Theba's abduction, and filled with sorrowful forebodings concerning her fate, Eurydice sought the presence of the Queen, whom she found overwhelmed with grief and apprehension. For this beautiful and intriguing woman, the creature of sunlight and prosperity, had no courage whatever in the hour of danger. Her beauty and soft coquettish ways had held Philip's heart in complete subjection, everything being made subservient to her wishes; but now, her protector gone and her life and that of her son threatened, she could do nothing but grieve over her misfortunes.

Assuring her mistress of the departure of the soldiers, Eurydice said nothing of the abduction of Theba, and so was able in some measure to quiet the agitation of the Queen. Lifting herself from the couch upon which she reclined, Cleopatra asked, referring to the visit of the Epirot guard:

"Think you the soldiers have gone in truth, or is it but an interlude to some new outrage?"

"I know not, but lest they should return I will lose no time in seeking the King to apprise him of all that has occurred — and what part, if any, he had in the matter," she added, making no reference to Theba.



"What! Is the King in Edessa?"

"So I am this moment advised."

"Think you he ordered the visit—or was it Olympias?" Cleopatra asked, shuddering at thought of her dreaded rival.

"I know not what to think, oh Queen, the day being one of such horror that every form of deception is possible under cover of the terror and confusion."

"Succeeding to the throne without a contest, 'tis monstrous to think that he should meditate harm to his father's son or hapless Queen!" Cleopatra moaned.

"Nor is it like him to make war on the defenceless, but Lyncestes' word bore such air of truth that only Alexander's assurance to the contrary can allay my fears."

"Make haste then, and on bended knee, beg that provision be made without delay to guard my person and that of the young Prince from further molestation."

"Yes, oh Queen."

"Convey to him the assurance of my love and fealty, and my confident expectation of his greatness, now that he has risen to power," the poor Queen added, her hopes for Ceranus and all her opposition to Alexander swept away by the danger that menaced her and her child.



IN THE KING'S GARDEN



Doing as she was bid, and instructing the attendants not to leave the Queen's side, Eurydice hurriedly left the palace, and fearing to venture on the public street directed her steps to the King's private gate, by which access was gained to the grounds of the regal palace. Reaching the royal garden, everything was strange to her, for no one was permitted to visit the secluded spot save the Monarch and his Queen. Now, beholding it for the first time, she stopped, surprised and entranced by its bewitching beauty. Before her, as in a picture, a grass-grown glade lay outstretched, bathed in the moon's soft light, and beyond, as a framework to the sylvan picture, majestic oaks cast their fantastic shadows across the intervening space. To the right, and shutting out the city as with a screen, stately birch and chestnut trees were grouped, while on the mountain-side, seen through moon-lit vistas, clothed in the violet mists of the night, a miniature torrent leaped, plunging hither and thither in its steep descent. On the summit of the towering mountain, and ominous of the day's tragedies, fires, singly and in groups, flashed forth or quickly died away, as messages were conveyed to distant points, or acknowledgment made of those received. Farther off, amid the stillness of sheltering trees, miniature lakes and slumbering lagoons were dimly visible, their quiet depths stirred by wild fowl as if it were their native home. About

the base of the mountain, and on its terraced heights, to add to the picturesqueness of the scene, grapevines clustered, loaded with purple fruit, from which, with autumn's coming, slaves would tread out the strong wine so dear to the hearts of Macedonia's children.

Such hurried glimpse she caught as she surveyed the bewildering scene, soothed by the evening breeze and the soft stillness of the night, no sound disturbing its perfect quiet save the faint neighing of horses in the court beyond, where couriers came and went incessantly on the business of the King. Reminded of her errand, she hurried across the picturesque glade, her mind filled with the sorrows of those so near and dear to her; but reaching its further extremity, a cry of fright escaped her as she came suddenly upon an armed soldier leaning on his spear in the deep shadow of the overhanging trees. Seeing him, hope died within her breast, for if the soldiers of the King watched and threatened the palace then indeed were the fortunes of her mistress hopeless. Thus she reasoned, but in truth the despairing maid had little cause to fear, for he who watched was Medius, who, neglectful of his duty to the King, had hastened hither that he might gaze upon the time-worn walls that sheltered the person of his love. Seeing her, Medius, surprised at her unexpected appearance and the strangeness of the meeting, uttered an exclama-

tion of delight as he hastened to her side. Falling on his knees he grasped her hands, exclaiming:

"Tell me, Eurydice, my love, the meaning of your presence here at this strange hour of the night? Is it some errand of the unhappy Queen or do you come in answer to my fervent prayers?"

To his impassioned words she made no answer, save tears and sighs, overwhelmed that her fears should in a moment have turned to sudden happiness. For to see her love, unexpected and unthought of, so agitated her tired heart, that all speech was for the moment denied her.

Ignorant of her errand of mercy and of the occurrences of the last hour, Medius, unable to understand the meaning of her tears and deep silence, rose to his feet, crying out with sorrowing voice:

"You do not love me, Eurydice, and 'twas vain of me to have expected something different; you so exalted of rank, so beautiful, so gentle and true of heart, and I naught and all unworthy of thy love. But foolishly I loved, yet dared not hope, when, all unexpected, you came upon me, and I revealing again the secret of my heart, have destroyed all the sweet dreams of life."

Listening, enraptured, to his avowal, her heart stirred to the breaking-point by what had gone before and now filled with pity for the deep dejection of him she loved, she reached forth her hands and

clasping his face drew him to her and kissed him, her cheeks afire with blushes, saying:

"You did not mistake, Medius, for I loved you as a child, and now still more devotedly if that be possible."

"Do you in truth love me, sweetest and dearest of women?" he cried, clasping her in his arms.

"Yes, and with no change, since that fateful hour, when, a youth, you were brought to my mother's cottage stricken down by Amyntas' poisoned weapon," she sighed, responding to his soft caress.

"Oh happy stroke! Surely some kindly god must have guided Amyntas' hand! And you loved me from that first hour as I have you?"

"Yes, through all the weeks and months that we nursed you as you lay hidden in the King's chamber with no one but Jaron to share my vigils," she confessed.

"Blessed sickness, nor did I wish the hours cut short, and many times when Jaron thought the end had come, I would not die for loving you and having you by my side. And now that you are all my own the joy of our sweet Prince in coming to the crown, gives him not half the happiness I feel to hear you say you love me," and clasping her in his arms, he kissed her upturned face, happy in the fulfilment of all his hopes.

Thus these two hearts that had so long been one were joined together in mutual expressions of their love. But presently remembering with a flush of shame the errand upon which she came, Eurydice put him from her, as she hastily recounted the object of her visit, and the deep distress of her august mistress. Being told that the King had returned to the regal palace, she besought Medius to take her to him that he, being made acquainted with the deception practised on Theba, might order her release ere harm befell her. And so, with many fervent kisses and stoppages by the way to tell their love anew, they made their way to the King's palace, where Medius, being captain of the watch, found no trouble in passing the soldiers that guarded the approach to the royal abode. Gaining access to the presence chamber, they found the King seated on the throne, clothed in a white linen tunic, girt about by a jewelled belt, his brow encircled by a band of gold; and in audience before him the Athenian envoy, who had come to express his sorrow for Philip's death and to felicitate the young Monarch on his peaceable succession to the crown.

"Convey to the exalted officials of your government, and through them to the citizens of Athens," the King was saying as Medius and Eurydice entered, "the assurance of my love and admiration for the present prosperity of your noble city and its great achievements in the past; achievements



which the Kings of Macedonia, Grecians like yourself, have ever warmly applauded."

"My people will be deeply grateful for your kindly words, oh King; nor will I fail to express them in fitting terms to my countrymen."

"Say to them that it will ever be my fervent desire to live in love and happy accord with the people of Athens, shaping my acts in all things possible with their desires."

"In that, oh King, their aspirations point now, as in the centuries that have passed, to perfect freedom of action uninfluenced and uncontrolled by external force," the envoy gravely responded, referring in disapproval to the act whereby Athens in concert with other cities of Greece had been compelled to accept Philip's guardianship in matters relating to their foreign relations and armed forces.

"Following the example of my august father, it is my purpose to accord civil freedom to every Grecian city, and such independent action otherwise as is consistent with what is to be feared from our foreign enemies," Alexander mildly reproved, seeming not to attach importance to the Grecian's pointed speech.

"All-powerful in war and cunning in council, Philip dead, Athens and her sister cities, no longer subservient to his mighty mandate, will, each aiding the other, return to their ancient forms, which more fitly conserve their interests and independence than

subserviency to a foreign power as in the late King's time," the Ambassador coldly responded, repudiating the continuance of the guardianship of Greece by Alexander.

"The cemented power of all," the King frowned, "rested not with Philip but in the kingship of Macedonia, for there only lies the strength to conserve the internal prosperity of Greece by freeing her from the dangers of foreign invasion or intermeddling; and thus the exigencies of life that fall to the lot of Kings, as in the case of other men, do not nor will not end with the sovereignty exercised by Philip."

Hearing him, the envoy vouchsafed no reply, save a deprecating smile as if in dissent that this young King should arrogate to himself the power that had only been accorded Philip after years of bloody strife. Bowing low before the throne, the envoy took his departure amid a profound silence that fitly expressed the astonishment of those who listened to the bold defiance of the Athenian representative and the young King's stern reply.

Thus Alexander was from the first to experience, as did Philip, the evasion of Athens; an evasion which was not to die out with the passing years, and which, in depriving Greece of the virile strength and kinship of Macedonia, was to forever prevent the cementing of Grecian power, and in so preventing make that country at last the creature

of Rome, instead of the dominating power of the world as it might have been had wiser counsels prevailed.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE APPEAL TO ALEXANDER

AFTER the withdrawal of the Athenian envoy, Medius and Eurydice made their way to the foot of the throne, where they stood awaiting the notice of the King, who sat with abstracted brow, meditating on what had occurred, and the reconquest of Greece that it foreshadowed. At last, lifting his head and espying the Princess, he came down from the throne and taking both her hands in his, welcomed her as in former days.

"But what strange errand, cousin, brings you here at this late hour of the night to give me cheerfulness of thought with the sight of your gentle face?" he presently asked, his smile hiding the anxiety her unexpected presence caused him.

"'Tis indeed a most strange errand, oh King," she answered, raising his hand to her lips, "and one you will scarce credit, I fear."

"Come, make me your confidant as in the old days," he smiled, leading her to a divan and seating himself by her side.

"I know not how to tell my story now that I am here, it concerns me so deeply," she hesitated.

"Whatever concerns you, cousin, you know is of equal interest to me," he encouraged. "Come," he

went on, pushing back the silken hood from about her head, "I am a King not a day old and scarce know the duties of my office, but you will believe in my good-will and desire to help you."

"I knew it would be so, yet the grievousness of it all made me hesitate to come to you," she said, striving to approach the subject so as not to bring shame or harm to others by her disclosures.

"It does not matter, cousin; tell me what it is, in your own time, and in your own way — nor fear to give offence," he added, questioning her with his eyes.

"With your permission then, 'tis this, and if I am awkward in the telling you must pardon me. A little while ago," she recounted, encouraged by his amiable manner, "when the Queen, Cleopatra, had retired for the night, dreaming of no harm, the palace was suddenly surrounded by a body of Epirot soldiers, access being gained by scaling-ladders brought for the purpose. Forcing an entrance, they awakened the inmates by their clamour, and when the frightened attendants had assembled they bore away — my slave, Theba, who is more my companion than bondswoman."

"Bore away your slave!" he cried incredulously.

"Yes, oh King."

"And did she go willingly?"

"Yes — being told it was the King's order."

"The King's order! Surely you did not hear aright, cousin?"

"Yes, it was as I say."

"Think you they knew her to be your slave, or did they mistake her for another?" the King interrogated with lowering brow, conscious she had left much untold.

"I cannot answer that, oh King," she evaded, with downcast eyes.

"Whither was she taken?" he asked abruptly, her evasion confirming his suspicion.

"To the citadel."

"To the citadel!" he repeated, his thoughts reverting to Olympias and her desire to avenge herself on all who had been parties to her disgrace.

"Yes, oh King."

"Does the Queen, Cleopatra, know of the abduction?"

"No, she believes the soldiers went away empty-handed."

"'Twas a kindness and like you, cousin, to keep it from her," he said, raising her hand to his lips in grateful thanks for her discretion.

"The cause of the maid's abduction, oh King, is plain enough to me, if you would care to hear it," Lysimachus, who stood listening, interposed with the freedom that Alexander always accorded his old and cherished tutor.

"And what may it be, think you, my good friend?" the King asked, with absent manner, his mind intent upon other things.

"Why Hebe hath not such form as this Theba of whom she speaks, and for her eyes they are an iridescent dream and look out at you now brown, now blue, now violet-green, then a blending of all combined, and with such hidden depths and deep intent that, losing all assurance, you drop your own as if you had committed an offence. 'Tis her beauty," he chuckled, "that has been her undoing — but a slave she is not, nor has been this many an hour."

Hearing him, Eurydice looked up surprised, and observing her look of inquiry, Lysimachus continued, glad of an opportunity to show his knowledge:

"She is a free woman in this that the King, having accepted a cup of wine at her hands, the acceptance of the gift being his own act, she from that moment became free — for such is the custom and one well approved by all the kings of Macedonia."

Ignorant of the occurrence to which the old man referred, Alexander asked:

"What mean you, Lysimachus? When did this slave give drink to the King?"

"Today, in the camp, as you, faint from heat and exhaustion, harangued the soldiers, when observing your pallid face she ran and fetched a cup of wine,

and you, raising it aloft, toasted the army, and by the timely act won over those who hesitated," Lysimachus recounted, as if the event influenced the placing of the crown, as indeed it might have done, such trivial things oftentimes determining the impulses of the wavering multitude. "It cannot be that you have forgotten her, the fair being with hair of golden brown, tinged with the velvet hue of September's setting sun; who, when she speaks, discloses teeth so dazzling white that in gazing upon them you forget the ambrosial sweetness of her parted lips. Surely, Master, having looked upon the divine creature, you cannot have forgotten her fair countenance?" he reproved.

"No, I remember her well, and if she be the slave you speak of, cousin," he smiled, turning to Eurydice, "the cup of wine is not all nor half the debt I owe her. For 'twas she who, riding in haste and disregardful of the danger she incurred, met me as I returned from Pella to warn me of the meditated treachery of my Thracian allies," the King explained, greatly astonished at all he had heard.

"I know naught of the proffered cup nor the warning, oh King, but she is over-fond of the flute and fife, and much given because of it to following the soldiers, though in other things so shy that she seems more a child than a woman."

Pondering on what he heard and assured that the errand of the Epirot soldiers was far different from



what Eurydice had divulged, yet loth to question her further or make known his suspicions, he turned to Demetrius, who had been an attentive and angry listener to the story of Theba's abduction:

"You failed not in any way in your duty to watch over the safe return of the maid?"

"No, oh King."

"Was she bespoken by any one?"

"No, her flight was like an arrow, and following a secret path she neither saw nor spoke to any one. Afterward, at the palace I was happily able to render her some further service — but of which it does not matter now to tell," he stammered, thinking with some concern of his impudent personation of the King.

Rising to his feet, the King determined to go in person to secure the maid's release, but reflecting on the publicity and comment it would occasion, he ran his eye over the crowded room to find some one he might entrust with the delicate duty. Demetrius, observing the look and divining his purpose, interposed, saying:

"If I performed the other service faithfully, oh King, let the duty of rescuing the child from those who have abducted her fall to me."

"There is no one in whom I have greater confidence, Demetrius," the King assented. "Take with you such soldiers as you require, and hasten to the citadel with all dispatch and demand the instant

release of the prisoner, battering down the crazy structure if need be. Having accomplished your errand and escorted the maid to the palace, convey to her the expression of my deep regret at the indignity she has suffered; a regret I shall take occasion to express in person at an early moment," he commanded, his brow black as night, indignant and ashamed, that under cover of the day's disorder a thing so brutal and unwarranted should have occurred.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THEBA'S LOVE

DIVINING much that Eurydice had left unsaid regarding the abduction of Theba, and fearful of the indignities that might be offered his love, Demetrius lost no time in doing as the King commanded. Hurriedly collecting a body of troops, he mounted a waiting horse and set out at once for the citadel. Admitted by the attendant guard without parley on hearing the imperious summons, "In the King's name!" he made known to Harpalus his order, and when the latter would have dallied to seek audience with Olympias, he commanded him with threatening gesture, to deliver the prisoner instantly into his hands. Fearful of the outcome to himself from the King's wrath, Harpalus no longer hesitated, bidding Demetrius stay where he was until his return; but the latter, fearing some deception, commanded him to lead the way to the cell without delay. Yielding reluctant assent, the frightened governour conducted him to the gloomy depths beneath the citadel, the fetid air of which became each moment more oppressive as they proceeded.

"God of gods, do you lead me aright, Harpalus, or is it some trick you are playing? It cannot be

that a human being is imprisoned within this loathsome place?" Demetrius gasped, stopping short as he peered forward in the dim light of the other's torch.

"This is nothing to what lies before us," Harpalus said, striving to protect his face from the bats that flew hither and thither in the semi-darkness, his voice half drowned by the hurrying feet of monstrous rats, scurrying to their hiding-places, frightened by the unusual visit. "Come, hasten lest we be too late."

Terrified at the purport of Harpalus' words, Demetrius needed no further spur, but, alarmed as to the outcome of his visit, followed his companion without further comment.

Traversing the unused passages that lay like a labyrinth beneath the crumbling citadel, thick with the accumulated dust of centuries, they reached the vaulted room from which access was gained to the sunken cell. Here they found the soldiers Harpalus had left on guard, stupefied with liquor, as was evinced by their manner and the skin of wine that lay partly consumed on the floor beside them.

As Harpalus and Demetrius entered the chamber the sound of rushing water reached them from beneath their feet, lending to the dimly lighted room and the savage faces of the guards an appearance awesome in the extreme. Shuddering, Harpalus called to the soldiers in hot haste:

"Quick, Epirots, open the cell."

But to this they made no response save to draw away; and on his repeating the command with greater urgency, one of them replied with surly voice:

"'Tis useless, the cell is flooded and the prisoner dead."

"How know you she is dead?"

"Listen — 'tis the silence of death."

"Has the prisoner made no outcry; no appeal for mercy?" Harpalus questioned, terrified.

"No, she was dead with fear ere we closed the pit."

"Brute, you would not have heeded had she called!"

"She has not called," the Epirot answered doggedly.

"'Tis impossible she could have died without some sign," Harpalus choked, sinking down overcome with fear.

"Why do you stand chattering like children while she is dying or dead beneath our feet?" Demetrius interposed, divining the secret of the rushing water. "There's some mystery here, Harpalus — she could not have died without outcry; such courage is beyond thought," he went on. But the Epirot soldiers making no move, Medius, stung to madness by their stolid manner, advanced upon them with a cry of fury, drawing his sword, exclaiming:

"Quick, uncover the pit, slaves, ere I split your savage skulls!"

Fearing for their lives, the drunken soldiers sprang to their feet, and with the aid of Demetrius — for Harpalus was helpless, overcome by fear — the heavy stone was lifted from the socket in which it rested. Grasping a torch, Demetrius plunged it into the depths below, upon which the Epirot soldiers uttered a cry of superstitious fear, for the prisoner had not moved from the spot where they had lowered her, but stood immersed in the circling water silent and motionless as if turned to stone. Affrighted, the soldiers drew back, but Demetrius, with a cry of anguish, stooped down and caught her in his arms. As he lifted her to the floor above, the mantle fell from about her head, seeing which Harpalus uttered an exclamation of surprise and terror; for it was not the face of Cleopatra, as he had supposed, but that of a young and beautiful girl whom he had never before seen. Aroused by the cry and as if for the first time conscious of herself, a convulsive tremour shook the frame of the young girl, and with a long-drawn sigh her head fell forward in a faint.

"Quick, Harpalus, some wine!" Demetrius called, as he wrapped the chilled figure in his military cloak. "Courage, courage, child — there's naught to fear," he comforted, as he forced a portion of the wine down her throat. Then, releasing her, he



FROM THE DEPTHS

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chafed her face and limbs with unremitting patience, until little by little, amidst his cries of despair and encouragement, some glow of colour returned to her waxen cheeks. But to all he said, as consciousness returned, she made no answer whatever, and discouraged at last with the fruitless effort, he took her in his arms and made his way to the entrance of the citadel. There, disregarding Harpalus' words of entreaty and explanation, he mounted his horse, and clasping his precious burden to his heart, set out on his return to the palace.

Revived by the night air as they descended the rock-cut road, she presently showed some signs of returning life, at which Demetrius, greatly encouraged, asked, seeking to clear up the mystery only half divulged by Eurydice.

"Why did they seek your death, dearest? Surely you have never offended any one?"

"They believed me to be the Queen whom Olympias had condemned," she murmured, after some hesitation.

"Why did you not divulge the truth and save yourself when they sought to murder you?" he asked, unable to understand why she should have remained silent when death threatened her in the flooded cell. But as she vouchsafed no explanation of her strange conduct, he presently went on: "The King suspected the truth, and immediately the story

was told him bade me hasten to your aid, commanding me to storm the castle, if need be, to secure your release."

"The King! Was it he who sent you?" she asked, awakened to life by the magic word.

"Yes; how else could I have gained entrance to the citadel? And 'twas well I hastened, for there was death in the chill of the icy water."

"Was it cold?" she asked, as if unconscious of the ordeal through which she had passed.

"Were you not conscious of it, dearest?" he asked, amazed.

"No; I was as one paralyzed."

"From fright?"

"I know not — my thoughts were elsewhere — and 'tis not hard to die, Demetrius," she sighed.

"Not for those broken in years, but for the young, who have youth and hope before them, yes, my love," he grieved, overwhelmed by her melancholy.

"If one be without hope, youth but makes the burden of life the heavier," she answered, wearily.

"Yes, for those held in bondage, it may be, but you are no longer a slave, my love," he cried with enlivened voice, thinking he had discovered the secret of her sadness.

"No longer a slave?" she repeated, but not as if it mattered.

"No; you are free, sweet child, and of the many things that have happened this day that is the greatest and best of all," he protested, pressing his lips to hers in love and pity.

"I shall always be the slave of Eurydice, nor would I wish to have it otherwise, unless it might be to please you who are so gentle and kind to me," she sorrowed.

"No; you are free as I say, for the King's act made you so."

"The King's act!" she whispered, lifting her head, colour flooding her cheeks.

"Yes."

"'Twas not he, but Eurydice — and in pity of my servitude," she protested.

"No, 'twas the King's act and his alone, not the thought of another, and when the things that now fill his mind no longer occupy his thoughts, he will cause you to be made of rank worthy of your gentle heart and the unselfish sacrifices of this day and night," Demetrius cried, confident of what he said.

"No, I merit nothing at the King's hands and will accept nothing, for I could not have done what I did with thought of reward."

"But what you did is as the very honour of the throne, for Cleopatra has not been condemned, and the conspiracy to murder her was the act of Olympias, and her death would have grieved the King

beyond measure, for he would have thought himself disgraced by the act."

"I would gladly die to save the King a sorrow," she sobbed — "No! No! I do not mean the King," she hurried on, "but the Princess and the good Queen. Oh, my head whirls and I do not know what I say," she choked, hiding her face.

Comforting her, Demetrius sought to question her further, but returning no answer to his entreaty, she lay in his arms as one dead. After a while, seemingly rested, she raised herself, whispering:

"Did the King send you, Demetrius, or did I dream it?"

"Yes, the King and with the impatience and fierce rage he sometimes shows when things displease him."

"How did he know?" she asked, forgetful of what had occurred before her abduction.

"Immediately you were carried off by Lyncestes the Princess hurried to the King, and he hearing her story bade me hasten to the castle and obtain your release — and, thank the gods, it was I and not some one else to whom the duty fell," he murmured, pressing her hand to his lips.

"'Twas good in him—but had he come himself he would not have borne me thus in his arms! No, no, that would have been too much to expect from one so exalted," she sighed.

"Yes, child, his shame would have been so great that he would not have suffered another to touch you."

"'Twould have been in pity only that he held me — such as men feel for hapless animals they have saved from harm, Demetrius — but what would it have mattered!" she suddenly cried out in frenzy. "He would have held me — as you do — pressed against his heart, and for that I would have gladly died. Oh, my King, my Prince, my love, I want you! I want you! And to feel your arms about me and your breath upon my cheek I would give up all there is in life!" she sobbed, distracted. But presently, overcoming the paroxysm that possessed her, she cried out in shame: "No! No! I do not mean that, Demetrius! I hate the King! I hate him! You only are kind — you only came to save me. Had he come he would have thrust me in a wine cart, or had he sought to clasp me in his arms I would have waked the city with my angry cries. But with you, Demetrius, I feel not the fear. I would did he hold me," she wailed, with breaking heart, her face flooded with tears.

To this outbreak Demetrius made no response, but looking down in deep surprise and pity could by no means believe she raved, but that she spoke in truth her very soul. Or was it the strain put upon her by the horrors of the day and night? Sorrowing, at a loss how to rightly interpret her

wild outbreak, his heart dead within him, he sought no longer to question her, but urging his horse to greater speed, quickly reached the palace yard, where the attendants of the Queen welcomed his coming with cries of joy. Drawing her to him ere releasing her from his arms, he whispered:

"If I may not be more to you than a brother, poor child, you granted me that favour, and to me as to a brother you love and trust you must come, my darling, when your sorrows are too great for you to bear alone," and pressing his lips to hers he gave her into the hands of the waiting attendants, after which he sorrowfully took his departure to report the result of his mission to the King.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE TRAGEDY

WITH the advance of the night Cleopatra, unable to dismiss from her thoughts the terrible events of the day, agitated and alarmed, sought in vain repose of body or mind. Staring, wide-eyed, the dimly lighted room in which she lay became a place of hidden and mysterious horrors, and in the patient slaves, intent upon their duties, she beheld only creatures of the revengeful Queen, stealthily threatening her life. Or if she but lost herself for a moment in fitful sleep, Philip's firm, quick step, followed by some word of endearment awakened her to life, shrieking, thinking his spectre stood beside her couch, white and unutterably sad. To her excited ear the harmless voices of the night, echoing and re-echoing through the gloomy structure, were pregnant with dire threatenings; and fit it was, for had not this crumbling palace, nay, the very room in which she lay, echoed back the despairing cry of kings and princes innumerable in the bloody annals of the past! Such indeed had ever been the fate of those who were defenseless, and was it different now when Philip, the strongest of them all, had fallen, murdered in the open day?

Thus the poor Queen lay trembling and affright-



ed, fearing she knew not what, and when an hour had passed and Eurydice did not return, the afflicted woman, thinking herself abandoned, could endure the agony of suspense no longer. Springing to her feet, fright gave her strength, and wrapping herself in a hooded cloak, and bidding a slave attend her, she hurried through the dimly lighted halls to the private entrance of the palace. Following the well-known path that but yesterday only the King or she might traverse, she presently found herself in the royal garden where, worn and exhausted, she rested a moment to regain her strength. Looking about her with throbbing heart, she burst into a flood of tears, overcome by the sad recollections that the enchanted spot recalled to her weakened senses. Lifting her hands to heaven, her spirits wasted, she cried aloud:

"Oh Philip! Philip! My beloved, where art thou? Why art thou not here to comfort thy unhappy Queen — thou so resolute and I so weak? Art thou near me, Philip; canst hear the notes of yonder whip-poor-will, whose melody thou didst love so well? Last night—oh cruel gods, was it so little time ago — thou saidst there was no sound so sweet except it was my voice! And thou art gone, thou who were so fond a lover, so gentle and true to me! And shall I never see thee more, shall we never again, like truant children, stand spell-bound beneath these trees as in the days gone by, listening to the whip-poor-will's sweet melody?"

Thus the poor Queen grieved, sorrowing over the past, as she beheld the spot, hallowed by their love and Philip's tender words. At length, overcoming her despair, she hurried on until, nearing the entrance to the regal palace, she stopped affrighted on beholding in her path the cloaked figure of Olympias. Standing revealed by the light of the flaming torches, the old Queen was threatening with vengeful voice the soldiers who refused her admittance to the royal abode; but the suspicious and surly guard, paying no heed to her demand for admittance, rudely thrust her back.

"'Tis all too late, beldame, for such as thee to be abroad! Go seek the camp on yonder plain, there thou mayest find a king, perchance, who regards not age or wrinkles."

"Wretch! I am Olympias, the Queen, Alexander's mother! Let me pass lest he put thee to death for thy impudence!" she threatened, with upraised arm.

"Alexander's grandmother! Begone! Thou art over-old to seek the young King at night. Dost think him blind? Away with thee ere thou find thyself in the guardhouse washing the soldiers' dirty linen for thy keep!"

Pushed back, furious with rage, she turned about and recognizing Cleopatra, whom she thought confined within the prison of the citadel; she held up her hands in awesome fear as if beholding a spirit

from the other world. But when Cleopatra sought to pass, overcoming her superstitious fear, Olympias let fall the hood from about her head, and, advancing upon the Queen with threatening visage, screamed:

"Thou spirit of evil, for what purpose comest thou here, warm and softly mantled as for the bridal-couch, while Philip's flitting shade, black and cold, unsteady, stalks the strange and hidden depths of death. Thou sprite, dost come hoping to corrupt the son as thou didst the father?"

"I come to seek protection and the mercy of Alexander, nothing more; and if the mighty shade of Philip is permitted to linger yet awhile in the abode of men, he will smile approval, not frown upon the act," Cleopatra responded, aroused by the other's bitter speech.

"Philip's shade, foul and bloody, shrunken to its just proportions, looks no longer on the moon-lit night, but hides itself in the noisome caverns of the other world where thou shalt presently go to join him if there be no lower depths reserved for such as thee!" Olympias raged, advancing as if to strike the other down.

"Murderess! What matters it to thee where Philip's spirit rests? If he in aught the gods offended he has in nature paid the debt, and they, less revengeful than thee, thou savage and unnatural monster, will accord that mercy in the other



MEETING OF THE QUEENS



world which they denied him here! Let me pass, thou beast, for thou dost offend the gentle spirit of the night with thy murderous passions," Cleopatra cried, incensed beyond all measure at the other's grossness.

"What! Thou purring cat, whose mewing brought Philip to his bloody end, hast indeed claws beneath that soft and pliant skin? I'd not believe it. Begone! Go seek thy King, and in his cold embrace cool the ardour of thy hot blood!" Olympias screamed in a frenzy of hate, and snatching a dagger from her girdle rushed on her defenseless enemy. But the guard, looking on in wonder at the altercation, and not recognizing Olympias, who had been long absent from the court, interposing his spear held the enraged woman at bay.

Pointing her finger with contemptuous scorn at her deadly enemy, Cleopatra, all her pride aroused, exclaimed:

"Thou unutterable savage, dost wonder still why Philip put thee from his bed, or dost reason find no lodgment in thy clotted brain? Monster! Thou hast no place nor part with women, but, unsexed, shouldst herd unnamed with others like thee! Go thy way, thou hast my pity, nor longer do I fear thy hatred or murderous hand, for 'twere better far to die untimely, cut off in youth's soft hour, than live and reign with such as thee!"

"If thou hast pity I have naught but deadly

hatred," Olympias raved in fierce resentment. "Go to the King if thou wilt, but neither he nor all the world can protect thee save for the passing hour. For I will transgress Alexander's strict command—nay forfeit his love and all I hold most dear, rather than forego the vengeance that I meditate! This night," she went on with murderous fury, "thou hast evaded me, but by Bacchus' mystic rites, and all their hidden terrors, I will trust no one hereafter, but with my own hands put thee to death!"

"Kill me thou mayest; nor do I care, for there is naught in life I longer crave. Dying, if the cruel gods decree it so, I will seek the shade of Philip, and, finding it, forever dwell content," Cleopatra, all her anger gone, responded in a melancholy voice, as if indeed all desire to live had left her heart. But Olympias, disdaining further speech, drew her cloak about her, and paying no heed to the gaping soldiers who filled the court, turned and hastened from the royal enclosure.

Sorrowing, sore of heart, Cleopatra lost no time in entering the palace, and, presuming on her exalted station, bade an attendant conduct her to the King. Reaching his presence, she there found Eurydice, whom Alexander had detained that he might question her in regard to the events of the day and night. On beholding the pallid face and trembling form of the Queen, the King, surprised

by her presence, hastened to her, and taking her hand pressed it to his lips with gentle reverence, as if Philip were still alive and she his honoured wife.

"I owe you humble excuse, oh Queen, that I have not earlier sought your presence and paid you the respect and homage my heart so willingly accords your august person. But until within the hour all offices of love and courtesy have, of dire necessity, been made to yield to the pressing interests of the State; and so I trust you will believe," he said, again raising her hand to his lips as if to show to the assembled court the great honour in which he held his father's Queen. "What gentle errand of mercy or urgency of need," he presently resumed, as she stood still seemingly unable to speak, "personal to yourself or those you love, brings you to the royal abode at this late hour of the night?"

Reassured by his chivalrous manner and kindly words, she threw herself on her knees before him, and, grasping his hand, exclaimed in a voice broken by her sobs:

"I come, oh King, to crave protection for Ceranus, my son — thy brother — from the hand of death that threatens him." But when he made no move, she hurried on in terror, "Promise me, oh King, all-powerful as Philip was, that thou will spare his life!" she begged, pressing his hand to her lips.



To her appeal Alexander made no response, knowing the council had, for reasons of State and according to the customs of the age, already condemned the youth to death. Looking down in pity on the sorrowing mother, he could find no fitting word of comfort, but stood irresolute, his face taking on an ashy hue as if indeed it were he and not another whom death threatened. Unable to give her the assurance she craved, agitated and deeply stirred at her distress, he sought to raise her to her feet, but clinging to him and creeping forward on her knees she pleaded:

"No, I will not rise till thou hast promised what I ask—protection against all who would molest the unoffending child. Spare him, oh King, as the godlike Philip spared the youth, Amyntas, that he may live to cherish the memory of his unhappy father and watch with unselfish eyes the glorious reign of his exalted brother," she begged, her eyes blinded with tears.

"Rise, oh Queen, and hearkening to your prayer, I will at once dispatch a guard to protect the Prince from present harm or the unwarranted seizure of his person," the King promised, deeply distressed, unable to say more or to deny her this momentary comfort.

And truly enough, in this hour of Cleopatra's agony, the King's heart turned to her in pity, all his resentment for the harassments and dangers

that had beset him through her contriving, forgiven and forgotten as if they had never been. For it was like the mighty Prince, resolute in his ambitious purposes, once they were accomplished, to freely accord mercy to those who had offended. Thus, to Cleopatra, powerless, his heart went out in tender pity, and Ceranus, too, he would have spared, but well he knew that neither the pleading Queen nor any assurance conceivable of men could protect his Kingdom from civil war were there another claimant to the crown, and he, the rightful King, far away intent upon the conquest of Persia, a thing upon which all hearts were firmly set. But the peril was not immediate or urgent, and temporary reprieve was but an act of clemency due the unhappy Queen, and so reasoning he called to Demetrius, who had returned to the regal abode, and bade him hasten at once to the palace with a guard to protect its inmates from molestation.

Taking leave of Alexander in the gray of the early morning, Cleopatra and Eurydice, preceded by Demetrius, left the King's residence and took their way through the royal garden, the guard proceeding by the public street. Nearing their destination, all unconscious of coming harm, they were rudely startled by the frenzied cries that reached them from within the palace. Running forward, their hearts filled with apprehension, they gave no heed to the confusion that reigned throughout the

building, but hastened with all speed to the chamber where the young Prince slept. Throwing wide the door they found the room in wild disorder, the lamps extinguished and the furniture and trappings of the chamber upset and rudely broken. Approaching Ceranus' couch, Cleopatra beheld Theba lying on the floor, outstretched and motionless; but giving no heed to the inert form, she ran with frenzied cry to the tumbled bed on which Ceranus lay, and snatching the soft covering from off the couch, beheld him white and still in death! Lifting him in her arms she covered his face with kisses, calling upon him again and again with choking sobs to answer her, but all in vain. While thus engaged, overwhelmed with grief, calling upon the gods to aid her, Jaron, the leech, who was passing on some errand of mercy, hearing her cries, hurriedly entered the palace and inquiring the cause of the tumult hastened to the Queen's side. Taking the limp body of the child from her arms, he laid it on the bed, where he sought by every art then known to men to bring it back to life. But all his efforts proving fruitless, he raised himself with a sigh and turned to Theba, over whose inert form Demetrius grieved.

"Do not abandon my child, Jaron! He is not dead! See, he has no hurt and his body is still warm with the blood of life!" Cleopatra screamed, lifting Ceranus in her arms and turning to the leech with beseeching eyes.

To this Jaron could make no comforting response and taking the body of Ceranus from her trembling arms, tenderly laid it on the bed. Then motioning to Eurydice, who stood looking on, her face wet with tears, they after a while prevailed upon the bereaved Queen to retire, and placing her upon a couch, Jaron administered a powerful drug which presently brought the unhappy woman the relief of momentary forgetfulness.

Hastening to Theba, Jaron knelt beside the prostrate maid and resting his ear against her heart, presently exclaimed, his face expressing his deep relief:

"She has some hope of life—enough to build upon if there is no hidden hurt," and taking a vial from out his cloak, forced a portion of the liquid down her throat. Lifting her up, Demetrius placed her upon a couch where, with Jaron, he watched beside her until at last reviving colour brought assurance of returning life.

When in this way everything had been done that lay in his power, Demetrius called the attendants of the palace to him and questioned them as to the particulars of the assassination of Ceranus and the attempted murder of Theba. But from their disconnected and fragmentary accounts he could learn little, save that after the Queen's departure to seek the King a body of Epirot soldiers had suddenly appeared, and breaking down the gate forcibly

entered the palace; and without stop or speech hurried directly to the chamber of Ceranus. Theba, after her rescue from the dungeon of the citadel, worn with the excitement and fatigue of the night, had sought her couch, but on being apprised of the presence of the soldiers had hastened to the Prince's room where she sought in vain to protect the child, threatening the assassins with the King's vengeance if they harmed him in any way. At this moment when the soldiers, awed by her manner, stood irresolute, a woman shrouded in a cloak entered the dimly lighted room, and seeing the guard hesitate, threw back the cover from her head, revealing the terrible countenance of Olympias. Calling to the Epirot soldiers in their native tongue, she screamed:

"Cravens, are you cowed by one weak girl? Is it thus you obey your Queen's command? Must I, myself, strangle the brat?"

At this the soldiers, gaining courage, sprang upon Theba and grasping her by the throat bore her back, letting go their hold only when life seemed to be extinct. Seeing this, the attendants of the palace who had furtively watched from obscure hiding places fled for their lives, lest a like fate should befall them. So that concerning the death of the young Prince they could give no particulars, save that, awakened by the noise, he had cried out, affrighted at the strange faces and savage gestures of those about him. And thus it is that to this day

we do not certainly know whether he was strangled by Olympias or put to death in some other manner. In this way and contrary to the disposition of Alexander, the order of the council condemning Ceranus to death was fulfilled, Olympias in her cruel determination forestalling any act of mercy that the King might have been led to take on giving the matter further thought.

And in this way it fell out that the day set apart to commemorate Philip's greatness before all the world, opened with his untimely death and ended as we have seen, with the brutal murder of his unfortunate son, Ceranus.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THEBA RETURNS TO THE WORLD

THROUGH Jaron's patient skill and nursing, Theba was at last brought back to health, but long and doubtful was the struggle, and when death no longer threatened the good leech mourned lest her reason be destroyed in the awakening. Throughout her sickness Cleopatra—now no longer spoken of as Queen—and the Princess Eurydice vied with each other and the attendants of the palace in their watchfulness and gentle care; for when the horrors of the dungeon Theba had encountered on the memorable night of her imprisonment in the citadel became known the hearts of the King and those near him went out to her as to a loving sister. Thus it was that the forlorn slave, of whose history nobody had any knowledge, became as one exalted above every one around her.

Demetrius, bitterly regretful that he had not placed a guard about the palace when he rescued his love from prison, sat throughout the anxious days beside her couch or bent over her in tender ministrations. For him life had lost all its splendour, the chase, the practice of arms, the bustle of the camp, the affairs of the court, the glitter and gossip of the capital, the mystery of those who came and



went on the business of the King, that before were as the blood of life, had now no interest for him whatever. Haggard and disconsolate, he could not eat, and at night, tossing upon his bed when sleep visited his tired eyes, he saw his love, but always with her face turned toward the King. Sobbing, he would awake and with the first light of day spring from his couch as from a bed of torture to wander hither and thither distracted, until he might again seek her presence. There he would remain, patiently watching, solicitous of her every movement, bathing her fevered brow, and, when he might, pressing a fervent kiss on her white and unresisting hand. In this manner days and weeks went by, and when at last reason returned to the suffering maid the love-sick youth was the first to meet her wandering gaze.

"You know me, sister?" he smiled, overjoyed, caressing her hand.

"Yes," she whispered, as if surprised at the question, but presently becoming conscious of her weakness, she said: "Have I been long ill?"

"Many weeks, but the good leech who has ministered to you as to his own child, says you will soon be well and strong as before," he assured her with hopeful voice.

"Why did he not let me die?" she moaned, as the sorrows of her life recurred to her awakened senses.

"Do not say that, dearest, when every one will welcome you as if you were some gentle goddess sent to make us the better for your presence," he pleaded, his heart torn with anguish at her deep dejection.

"To die would be to rest—and my sickness has been filled with such frightful dreams—but not all were so," she added, as she conjured up the vision of one, likened to a god, who had bent over her couch in the darkened room, long regarding her, a sigh escaping his lips as if he were responsible for her distressful plight. And this god, sorrowing and compassionate, had caressed her face and hair as one would a sick child, lifting her hand to his lips with gentle reverence. All this with such vividness that it had seemed reality. But was it only a vision of the sick chamber, having no truth except in the longing of her heart; a phantom of the brain having no reality save in its disordered conjurings? Of all the visions that haunted her couch, this alone remained distinct, but whether the presence was a reality or only a fevered fancy, it came no more when consciousness returned; and grieving, the unhappy maid knew not whether to rejoice or sorrow with returning health.

When strength returned to the stricken maid, the events that had immediately preceded her sickness were as if they had no reality; and as no reference was made to them in her presence, she came at last

to believe that they, like the others, were but phantasies of the brain. At last, restored to health, the unhappy maid, out of love and preference, neglectful of her freedom, took up anew her life of attendance upon the Princess, nor would she listen to the latter's remonstrances, regarding her freedom so lightly that she would by no means remove the badge of servitude from about her neck, but left it there as a token of love and treasured it as such.

Thus matters stood on the return of the court to Pella, where Olympias, now all-powerful in the inner circles of the King's household, took up her abode in the royal palace, surrounding herself with every luxury that could add to the pomp and splendour of the regal life she loved. Cleopatra, her former rival, still in deep dejection over the death of Philip and her son, now lived apart, much neglected, with her remaining child, the Princess Europê, in the palace formerly occupied by Attalus, her uncle. Eurydice, who found no pleasure in the ostentatious surroundings of Olympias, would gladly have followed her mistress into retirement had not the Queen—for so Olympias was now called—commanded that she henceforth attend upon her person; and this that she might openly put a slight upon Cleopatra, whom she still looked upon with deep and unappeasable hatred.

When the betrothal of Eurydice and Medius finally came to the Queen's ears—for it had been

*THEBA RETURNS TO THE WORLD* 191

kept quiet during the days following Philip's death—she flew into a towering passion, basing her hostility to the union, so she averred, on the inequality of social standing as between the Princess, born of royal blood, and a simple nobleman, albeit a descendant of those who were kings while yet the Dorian Monarchs lived uneventful lives in Ancient Argos, unmindful of their future state. While seeking to coerce the gentle Princess to her will, and, so far as she could, poison the mind of Alexander against the proposed union, she lost no opportunity to exploit the high birth and accomplishments of Lyncestes, now her favourite, whose wife had recently died—and most strangely, it was whispered about the court. But her praises of Lyncestes only resulted in strengthening the aversion of Eurydice for the truculent Prince, and increased, correspondingly, her great love for Medius.

Impatient at the failure of her efforts, and determined in her course, the haughty Queen sought early occasion to compel obedience to her will. Sending for the Princess in pursuance of this, she received her with unusual kindness, much to the surprise of Eurydice, who had never been regarded with favour by the Queen.

"Come, sit beside me while I tell you how beautiful you have become, while I, neglectful of your charms, have thought of you only as a child," Olympias exclaimed, with amiable warmth on the Princess' presenting herself.

Abashed, fearful of the hidden purpose of the Queen in this unusual kindness, Eurydice, making low obeisance, stood still awaiting the other's further speech.

Drawing the Princess to her and caressing her hand, the Queen continued: "But while I have been blind, dearest, the discerning have noticed that you are in the glorious perfection of life, to be admired and loved above all other women."

"Such expressions do but shame me, gracious Queen," Eurydice said, blushing, not knowing what to say.

"I but repeat what is on every one's lips, child, and it being true, and you a Princess of the reigning house, both love and station await you as a wife."

"I have no present desire to wed, nor seek as a wife any great rank in life," Eurydice protested, drawing away.

"Nonsense, child, your station demands such distinction."

"Be not urgent, oh Queen, for it is my wish, as it was my mother's, to live in obscurity, for nothing but sorrow attends the exalted in our cruel country."

"Tut, tut, child; a Princess cannot shape her life as a shepherdess may, but must wed according to the convention that governs those of royal birth," the Queen insisted with growing earnestness.

*THEBA RETURNS TO THE WORLD* 193

"In this I should be permitted to have some voice, gracious Queen, my father having been exiled and at last subjected to a cruel death because of his exalted birth," Eurydice answered, emboldened at thought of her father's fate and her mother's sufferings.

"Because of that we owe it to you to make amends, and in doing so accord to you the honour and station unhappily denied your father and mother; and in furtherance of this, my child, whom think you I have selected for your husband?" the Queen bluntly asked, as of a thing fixed and irrevocable.

"I know not, oh Queen, and beseech you not to press the matter further," Eurydice protested, conscious that some great misfortune lurked behind the other's words.

"The royal house of Macedonia must make amends, too long delayed, for past unkindnesses to your family—and that it may be so and you fitly wed," she added, bluntly, angered at the other's evasions, "I have approved the suit of the Prince Lyncestes, who both loves and admires you."

"Lyncestes! And his wife not dead a week?" Eurydice cried out with horror.

"What matters it? He adores you, and the hurrying wars give no time for dallying in such a matter," the Queen urged with grim determination.

"No, no, I do not love Lyncestes, and what you propose overwhelms me with shame," Eurydice protested.

Regarding her with ill-concealed disdain, the Queen said:

"I do not ask you to love him, child. That is as it may be. He is a Prince of amiable disposition, highly favoured of person, and the confidant of the King, and so every way fit to wed one of exalted station."

"The confidant of the King!"

"Yes."

"It is impossible, oh Queen."

"It is as I say."

"How can such thing be and he a party to the murder of the King's father?" Eurydice exclaimed with growing anger.

"In what you say gossip has done Lyncestes cruel injustice, child. His brothers being implicated, suspicion naturally fell on him, but not for any cause. 'Twas he, you will remember, who was among the first to proclaim Alexander in the moment of greatest urgency, and in what he did influenced the wavering to acquiesce in the Prince's succession," the Queen explained, deeply incensed at the reference to Philip's death.

"There never was any question but what Alexander would be crowned, and 'twas like Lyncestes to urge others on to Philip's murder and then betray

them. But I care not how it was; I do not love him, nay, abhor him, and will die ere forced to become his wife," Eurydice protested, the imperious temper of the Dorian Kings blazing from her eyes.

"Love and hate hath naught to do with the mat-  
ing of those of royal blood, child; all must wed  
where interest falls. There, do not say more, but  
retire to your room and consider what I have said,  
for the marriage is a thing fixed and unalterable,"  
the Queen commanded, her eyes expressing her  
rage and deep determination.

"I will never wed Lyncestes—never, oh Queen,  
for I love and am betrothed to the noble Medius,  
who hath far greater honour in the estimation of  
men than the intriguing and treacherous Prince  
you favour," Eurydice exclaimed, openly defying  
the Queen.

"Love Medius as you may, I care not; but you  
shall wed Lyncestes, and no other, and it being a  
thing determined upon, school your thoughts from  
this hour to conform in all obedience and love to  
the wishes of the King."

"The King!" Eurydice exclaimed, terrified.

"Yes, the King, whose thought it is, and whose  
will in all such matters is final, as you know."

Overwhelmed, Eurydice was speechless, for  
hitherto Alexander had smiled on Medius' suit.  
Nor would she believe he had changed until he him-  
self so declared; and comforted by the thought, she



took her leave of the irate Queen, to weep and ponder in secret on what the other had said.

Reaching her apartment, she found Theba, to whom, as to a sister, she related, amid blinding tears and flashes of hot anger, all that had passed between her and the forceful Queen.

"Medius is the King's friend; nay, risked his life to save him from death at Cheronea, as every one now knows, and it cannot be that he will refuse him anything he asks," Theba insisted, grieved at Eurydice's distressful plight.

"Alexander loves him, but in such things kings, like other men, are governed by what is to their advantage," Eurydice said sorrowfully, as if no longer hopeful of the Monarch's kindness.

"How can your wedding Lyncestes advantage Alexander? Strong within himself, he cannot think such trivial help needful."

"So it would be were things different, but his ambition is far-reaching, and the times threatening, so that if the marriage seems helpful to the State, I fear he will no longer regard my wishes or those of Medius with favour."

"For shame to think of him so meanly!" Theba protested. "What use can this murderer and traitor be to him or to the State?"

"To further his warlike aims, or, it may be, for some hidden reason unknown to common men. Why else should he have spared him after Philip's murder?"

"'Twas to please Antipater, Philip's trusted governour, and 'tis Alexander's nature to be generous—to forgive those who crave it."

"And having pardoned, to forget the past, yet I cannot think he loves or trusts Lyncestes."

"Then go to him as to a brother without delay, lest his mind be further influenced by his mother's importunities."

"No, I dare not, Theba."

"Dare not!"

"No; for if by chance he should openly approve Medius' suit, I fear Lyncestes will murder both him and Medius."

"Lyncestes murder the King!" Theba exclaimed, recalling his part in Philip's death.

"Yes, as Pausanias killed his father for less cause."

"But Alexander, warned by Philip's death, will be more circumspect," Theba asserted, but not as if believing what she said.

"Lyncestes will do nothing openly, as did the vain and simple-minded Pausanias, but seek to harm the King through acts of secret treachery. A rat is not more secretive! He lives not in the light like other men, but surrounds himself with the half-savage retainers of his house, who know no purpose save his will. And in the coming wars, having access to the King, a thousand opportunities will be open to him to assassinate Alexander, or in

hidden ways subvert his aims and so bring about his ruin," Eurydice went on at length, as Lyncestes' opportunities for harm occurred to her awakened mind.

"Why do you not acquaint the Queen with all this, for she would not leave one Macedonian alive if Alexander's fortunes were thereby threatened, or he would gain in renown thereby?"

"She would not regard it seriously, for while at first she was bitterly distrustful of Lyncestes, he hath so worked upon her that she believes him necessary to Alexander's great success, and so favours him in every way."

"No, no," Theba protested, "it cannot be that she regards him as needful to Alexander."

"Yes, the King is young, and the Queen, though professing otherwise, has not that confidence in him that he has in himself; and Lyncestes being older and of approved command, she believes him of present use, and so seeks, by every means, to win him over."

"Then the King should be warned, or, if he disdains the peril, put Medius on his guard, that he may watch over his master's safety," Theba urged, alarmed for the King's safety, and thinking not at all that Medius was in greater danger than Alexander.

"The King, like Philip, would laugh at my presumption and give it no thought whatever; and

*THEBA RETURNS TO THE WORLD* 199

Medius, alas, has been sent to Thrace to hold the disaffected barbarians in check, and so is powerless—nay, is in great danger himself,” Eurydice grieved, at thought of her lover’s absence and perilous mission.

“Then the King will fall, stricken down from behind, as Philip was!” Theba murmured.

“I fear it may be so.”

“But is there no one whose office it is to protect his person?” Theba asked, at length.

“Yes, ’tis the duty of every officer and soldier.”

“But more particularly?”

“It rests with the royal guard under Hephestion’s watchful guidance.”

“That is only when the King is abroad—and against open enemies.”

“Yes, but none the less needful, as Philip found to his undoing.”

“But is there no one whose duty it is to guard him from covert enemies while he sleeps or rests secure within his tent?” Theba persisted.

“Yes, the pages who are ever near him, and whose duty it is to guard him as you say.”

“And are they watchful?”

“Yes—as youths.”

“As youths! Then their guardianship has no real value. But if it were otherwise,” Theba went on, after a long pause, “if indeed there were a page who had no purpose in life, no happiness, no ambition save to guard him, would that suffice?”

"There is no such page, child, nor can there be, for while they would lay down their lives for the King, they are but youths, as I say, and so do not regard their duty further than its mechanical needs."

"But if there were one, I say?"

"Then he would be as a god should it happen that the King were threatened in his own household."

"Is Demetrius not such a one? Is he not to be trusted?" Theba questioned, surprised.

"No, alas."

"Why?"

"He is mad."

"Mad?"

"Yes—of a hopeless love," Eurydice smiled, scanning the other's face.

"That is indeed to be mad," Theba murmured, with sorrowing heart.

"Except for that he might be trusted, being alert and without fear."

"Then if there be no one whose sole purpose in life is to protect the King, I will myself contrive a way to guard him," the love-sick maid exclaimed with fiery earnestness.

"Child, child, what foolish thing are you saying?" Eurydice expostulated, fearing the delirium of Theba's sickness had again taken possession of her.

*THEBA RETURNS TO THE WORLD* 201

But to this Theba made no response further than to presently ask:

"Is it true, as I have heard, that the army now being collected outside the walls of Pella has some immediate purpose in view?"

"Yes, and rumour runs that it is to march immediately."

"Will the King accompany it?"

"Yes, and in sole command, for Philip after twenty years of war had not such confidence in himself as the young King."

"In what direction will it march? To Illyria or Thrace, for each is marshalling its armies?"

"No, to the south to reassure our friends in Greece, and put down, if need be, those who are plotting against us."

"Does Lyncestes go, or will he remain behind to guard the King's interests?" Theba questioned, with scornful emphasis.

"He goes with the King, entrusted with an important command."

"Oh brave, young King! Intent upon your purpose, you regard no more than did your father the hidden dangers that threaten you, and so it will be until death overtakes you, or experience teaches greater wisdom," Theba mourned, under her breath, and taking leave of Eurydice, hastened to the sacrificial chamber. Lighting the sacred fire, she knelt in fervent prayer, beseeching the god of

Thebes to guard Alexander's life from the hidden enemies within and without his household; and when she could think of no further favour to crave in the King's behalf, she besought the god in mercy to guide her own steps aright. Thus half the night was passed, until at last, somewhat comforted in heart, she arose and sought her chamber, there to ponder upon the momentous undertaking she had resolved upon, some hint of which she had incautiously conveyed to Eurydice.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THEBA DISCLOSES HER PARENTAGE

ON the following morning Theba arose with the dawn, and having again sacrificed to the god of her country, she removed the badge of servitude from about her neck, and this with tears and regrets, as if it were in fact a token of remembrance and love. Afterward, much agitated at the trying ordeal before her, she sought the presence of Eurydice, and tender was the latter's greeting, for the Princess had been much disturbed by Theba's unaccountable utterance of the night before regarding the protection of the King's person. Observing Theba's air of deep dejection, she asked:

"What has happened to distress you, child, that you are so strangely moved?"

"The great sorrow I feel at parting from you, sweet mistress," Theba answered brokenly, unable in her agitation to be more circumspect.

"Parting from me?"

"Yes, Princess."

"What mean you by that?" Eurydice questioned, astonished.

"That I must leave you."

"Leave me? Impossible!" the other protested.

"Yes, however much it grieves me," Theba stammered, overcome.



"What cause have I given you for this cruel resolve?" Eurydice asked in all gentleness, thinking the other crazed.

Striving to regain her composure, Theba said:

"There is no cause, my mistress, except that my life here has been so filled with sorrow and strange happenings, that only a return to my own country will cure me of the distemper into which I have fallen."

"To Thebes?"

"Yes—and if it please you I wish to take my departure at once—today, if I may—lest staying I go mad," she pleaded.

"Leave me—and thus suddenly, when I have no one save you I can trust—beset as I am with enemies on every side?" Eurydice protested, at last assured that Theba spoke in her right mind.

"Forgive me if it seems unkind; but so it must be, though my heart breaks at the parting."

"No, no! you shall not go. What! Leave me without a friend when the King departs, as he does on the morrow!" the Princess cried, clasping Theba in her arms, overwhelmed by her distress.

"It must be, sweet Princess, for I cannot if I would delay my going, though my love for you bids me stay. But ere I go," she hurried on, lest she be diverted from her purpose, "I have a boon to crave, if indeed you love me and I have served you faithfully."

*THEBA DISCLOSES PARENTAGE* 205

"You know I love you and hold you in such sweet regard that everything I have is as if it were your own."

"Then may I hope that you will grant my request?"

"That I let you go? I cannot stay you if I would, for you are free, nor would I have it otherwise."

"No, 'tis not that. The favour I crave—and most strangely you will think—is that you will cause my brother—to be made a page—to the King," she went on, hesitating and abashed.

"A page to the King?" Eurydice cried, amazed.

"It is much I know—but you have only to ask the favour and it will be granted—for the King refuses you nothing," Theba answered more calmly.

Astonished at the abruptness and strangeness of the request, and the mystery of the sudden resolve to leave Pella, the Princess remained silent, not knowing what reply to make; but as Theba patiently awaited her answer, vouchsafing no explanation, she at last said:

"Do you not know that what you ask, my dear, is a thing impossible?"

"No, not impossible, Princess."

"Yes, for only the sons of nobles are thus honoured, it being one of the greatest favours in the gift of the King."

"I know it is as you say, but still I ask," Theba persisted.

"You but seek to try me, Theba, knowing the request cannot be granted, however much I might desire it."

"The rule of which you speak does not exclude those of alien birth of noble lineage, and so does not exclude my brother," Theba explained.

"Is he then of noble lineage?" Eurydice asked, astonished, recalling the mystery surrounding Theba's life.

"Yes, sweet Princess, there is no one in Macedonia more exalted, except the King."

"Your brother so exalted—and you a slave!"

"Yes; nor is it strange, for there are many of noble birth held in bondage, though not as I, fortunate in their servitude, but slaves indeed."

"If you are of noble family, why have you kept it from me, and I loving and trustful of you as of a sister," Eurydice chided, aggrieved.

"I cannot tell, unless it may have been from waywardness," Theba murmured.

"Nay; how could it have been that, when you knew I held you in such light bondage that you had but to ask to regain your freedom, whatever your birth."

"I know it, Princess, and have loved you the more because of it; but still I could not speak," she answered, with averted face.

"Of what family are you?" Eurydice asked, reverting to Theba's declaration.

"The family of Pelopidas," Theba answered, simply.

"Child! Child! Are you still poisoned with the fever of your long sickness that you return so mad an answer?" Eurydice stared, bewildered.

"No, 'tis as I say, however strange it may appear to you."

"Of the Pelopidæ, who have ever been the richest and most exalted of Thebes!"

"Yes; but it has always been said of them that they held serving their country a greater honour than the possession of riches or exalted birth."

"What you say, child, is beyond belief, yet I do now remember that in the delirium of your sickness you babbled much of things I could not understand: of chariot races wherein some one dear to you always took a part; of the dangers of the hunt, and other things I then thought strange," Eurydice recalled, musing on what the other had told her.

"If I spoke of such things, they were indeed once a part of my life."

"Yes, and I wonder now that I thought so lightly of it. But tell me, child, how did it happen that you, being of such high estate, were made a slave?"

"In the war with Philip I accompanied my father to Cheronea, and the Theban forces being defeated, and he falling in battle, I became a part of the spoils.

of the victor," Theba answered with faltering voice, agitated at the remembrance of her father's death.

"Was he of great rank in the Theban service?"

"Yes, in command of the Sacred Band," Theba answered, as if there could be nothing more exalted.

"'Tis said that Alexander, then a Prince, charging at the head of the Thessalian Cavalry, defeated and crushed the favoured few, not one surviving."

"Yes, so it was, but in fair fight, man to man, Princess; for when at last the Theban cause was lost, he stayed the onslaught, seeking to save those of the Sacred Band who still survived; but they, with one voice refusing quarter, all perished. The Prince did nothing in all that happened on that fatal field," Theba recounted with flushed face, as if it were her duty to justify his action, "that was not worthy his generous nature and kingly lineage."

"How did it happen, my love, a thing so unusual, that you were with the Theban forces on the field?"

"I viewed the battle from an eminence near at hand, and at last when our army gave way before the Prince's onslaught I contrived to reach my father, hoping to prevail upon him to give over the hopeless struggle, but all too late."

"And you?"

"I fell by his side, wounded from a thrust of a lance that pierced my crown," Theba explained, displaying a deep scar hidden by her abundant hair.

"Poor child! And afterward?"

"Thus I lay, I know not how long, until at last opening my eyes I saw, as in a vision vouchsafed by the gentle gods, a comely youth with pitying eyes, clad in armour, bending over me, his long and flaxen hair falling on my face," Theba murmured, as if recalling a dream of Paradise.

"'Twas Alexander—it must have been!"

"Yes—and to my undoing," Theba sighed under her breath.

"Surely the Prince did not leave you thus to the soldiery?"

"No, he stayed, but only to give directions for my care after which saying some gentle word, he mounted his horse and collecting his soldiers hastened to the relief of the King."

"Yes, yes; go on, go on."

"And the officer, doing as he was told, bore me to the camp, where my wound was dressed and every care given me."

"And then?"

"Long I lay wavering between life and death, for the wound was thought to be fatal, but at length, recovering somewhat my strength, I was brought to Pella, the King directing, I know not why, that I should be given to you; and so it was," Theba concluded, embracing the Princess, all the kindnesses she had received at the hands of the latter recurring to her.

"But why did you not divulge your name and lineage, for the Kings of Macedonia hold the Pelopidæ in such abiding love that neither Philip nor Alexander would disregard the tie more than an oath sworn before the gods?"

"I know there is such friendship, Princess, but something, perhaps the shame of servitude, held me back," Theba evaded with downcast eyes.

"No, no, that should have led you to divulge your birth, and so secure your freedom, not hide it."

"Do not question me, but think if you will that it arose from waywardness or love of adventure, knowing there could be little hardship in your service," Theba stammered.

"A most strange and unaccountable reason in one like you, brought up amid the splendours of Thebes, honoured above all others, and with every luxury of life afforded by that city of pampered ease and limitless indulgence," the Princess reflected, deeply moved by what she had heard.

"Our family has never regarded such things, but ever preferred the field and the camp to the palace and its ease; and so I have been brought up, and, though a woman, possess something of the martial spirit, and love of adventure of my warlike ancestors," Theba answered truly, striving to reassure the Princess and win her confidence.

"What you tell me is most strange, but whatever your motive may have been in concealing your name and birth I will see that your prayer is granted. But tell me," she said after a little, putting her arm about the other, "is it that your brother may guard the King that you wish him to become a page?" Eurydice asked, thinking of Theba's declaration of the night before.

"Yes; for he will have no purpose in life save that."

"Tell me his name."

"He is called Pelopidas, after him who freed his country and later, leading the Sacred Band, overcame the Spartan army, till then invincible."

"And is he like you?"

"Yes; we bear such strange resemblance to each other that it is the wonder of every one," Theba coloured.

"Enough! I will see that your wish is granted, and ask only that it may make you love me the more. But that is not all that I will do, nor the half, poor child," she went on smiling, "for your brother made a page, you shall become the ward of the King."

"The ward of the King!" Theba protested, drawing back, seeing in this the abandonment of her hope to become a page to Alexander, a thing she had fully determined upon.



"Yes, that you may have his protection and the honour that goes with such guardianship both here and in Thebes. This I may promise you as surely as the other, for the King is as complaisant of mood to those he loves as he is warlike in thought and act."

"'Tis like you to think of such a thing, Princess, but 'twould be a useless ceremony, and one I would avoid at this time when he is perplexed with a thousand cares, and foreign enemies threaten him on every hand."

"But your need of his protection is greater than you think, for the license of the camp too frequently takes on the guise of right, and virtue in these warlike times is often as the prey of vultures."

"Of such things I have no fear, sweet Princess, but if the need arise I will gladly do as you desire; but not now I beg of you, for I set out at once for Thebes, though of this I pray you speak to no one, least of all the King, lest something occur to hinder my immediate departure."

"But why so soon? A later day will do as well, and I have much to say to you."

"My present life is killing me, for I have no heart and am as one dead, and must needs find some restful change lest I go mad," Theba faltered, grieved at the thought of leaving Eurydice and the deep deception her course of action compelled her to practice.

*THEBA DISCLOSES PARENTAGE* 213

"Have your way, sweet child, for it is even as you say, but you will not refuse my love, for that will go with you wherever your life may lead you."

"Yes, yes, that I would have, for I love thee above all others on earth—save thee, oh King," she whispered turning away.

"Is it because you fear the King that you would not have him told of your departure?" Eurydice asked, as Theba arose to take her leave.

"I fear the King! No! No! Only I would not have him told," she pleaded, deeply agitated, as she tenderly embraced the sorrowing Princess in parting.



## CHAPTER XX

### THE KING'S NEW PAGE

SOME two months had now elapsed since Alexander's succession to the throne; a period of incessant activity, employed in organizing anew the affairs of the country. The enemies that threatened on every side, made bold by Philip's death, rendered haste imperative, if the King would prevent being attacked simultaneously from every quarter. Accepting with frank avowal and hearty good-will all who had faithfully served Philip, he made such changes as the new and unexpected situation required, and with such expedition and avoidance of display that two months after his succession to the throne, he was able to marshal an army of forty thousand men outside the walls of Pella. Meanwhile Thessaly lying on the southern border of Macedonia, and hitherto its firm ally, was arming, led thereto by the urgent solicitations of its Grecian neighbours. Of its purpose, however, nothing had been openly avowed, but that it contemplated action unfriendly to Macedonia there could be no doubt, all Greece being a unit in determining to deprive Alexander of the office of Captain General held by Philip and necessary in furtherance of the invasion of Persia. In this

emergency, fearing some overt act that would precipitate open war, Alexander determined to march his army into Greece and by forestalling unfriendly measures, force a continuance of the unity of action hitherto existing, brought about under Philip's wise and able guidance. Such haste was, moreover, rendered necessary as the barbarians to the north, east and west were everywhere organizing preparatory to openly declaring war against Macedonia. But the affairs of Greece being the more urgent, the King determined that the quieting of that country should precede all other efforts, leaving the subjugation of the barbarians to a later day. When in this way, his preparations were complete, he, in the middle of the night, embarked three thousand heavy armed infantry on board vessels moored in the river Lydias, beneath the walls of Pella. Silently weighing anchor, the great ships took their swift course to the south, and thence to the Thermaic Gulf, their purpose being to surprise and capture the impregnable pass known as the Vale of Tempe. But the King's plans coming to the knowledge of Lyncestes in advance, he had traitorously forestalled the purpose of the expedition by conveying news thereof to the Thessalian leaders.

"Concentrate your forces in the Vale of Tempe," so his word ran, conveyed by one of his Lyncestian followers, "for it is through that narrow defile,

foregoing the Perrhæbean pass, that the Macedonian bear meditates the instant invasion of your country. Block him at the Vale of Tempe, and Greece may at her leisure prepare for the struggle to follow. And if she will meanwhile concentrate her forces (foregoing the folly of a divided leadership as at Cheronea) Alexander may be driven back defeated, and Greece achieve her freedom from Macedonian interference."

Thus this intriguing and traitorous prince sought at the very outset of the new reign to frustrate the King's plans, and by discrediting his leadership encourage his enemies to open an aggressive war. For Lyncestes still sorrowed over the failure of Pausanias' plot, nor could he forgive Alexander's generous pardon of himself. Having among his immediate followers many serviceable agents, he had striven in every way to delay and hinder the execution of the King's measures, but these proving fruitless, he now sought to frustrate the plan to invade Greece through the Vale of Tempe.

The day following the departure of the warships, the city of Pella, already in a fever of excitement concerning the threatened war, was rudely awakened in the early morning by the wild clang of cymbals and the piercing notes of the flute and fife as the troops were marshalled in the plain preparatory to marching south. The day, as if in augury of Alexander's fortunes, was one of unclouded

splendour, the array of soldiers presenting a picture of martial glory, the like of which the warlike capital had never before witnessed. The rising sun, reflecting back the burnished shields and glistening spears, magnified their number tenfold, so that the inspiring notes of the instruments mingling with the pæan of victory chanted by the exultant soldiers gave such reality and splendour to the scene that the thousands who watched, lost in admiration, raised the exultant cry: "Long live the King! Long live the Army!"

In order to impress the beholder and inspire confidence in his troops, Alexander deployed his forces in battle array, according to their appointed order. To the right and in front were the royal foot guards, two thousand strong, and in the centre were massed ten thousand picked men known as the Phalanx, an invincible body of infantry armed with swords and spears, the latter of great length and weight. In front of these were three thousand skirmishers, made up of slingers, bowmen, and javelin-men, and to the right and left bodies of helmeted horsemen, carrying shields and armed with sword, spear and battle-ax. Following the Phalanx were light infantry, many of them mercenaries, armed with short spears and swords, a wide metal belt protecting the middle of the soldier's body. On the extreme right rode the Companions—brothers-in-arms of the King—two thousand strong, selected

from among the nobles and opulent landed gentry of the Kingdom. They, like the knights who patterned after them in the Middle Ages, wore iron helmets, and were clad throughout in armour, each being armed with shield, spear and sword, the heads and breasts of their horses being also protected by armour. The King rode in front of the *egema*, the elite of the Companions, and it was at the head of this ile of chosen men all of whom were personally known to him, that he opened every great battle in which he fought.

Following the army, and not less picturesque, were the batteries—huge catapults or bows mounted on platforms, and ballistas for throwing stones, red hot balls, fire-pots, and other projectiles. Back of these formidable engines of war, were the pack-animals, camp followers, and slaves, the latter used as occasion required in digging trenches, opening roads, building bridges, and performing the drudgery of the camp.

Mounted on his war-horse Bucephalus, Alexander reviewed the army from an eminence near the southern gate of the city, having about him the chief military officers and dignitaries of the Kingdom. Nearby, in a group by themselves, the pages were gathered, their number greatly exceeding those who attended the old King, for Alexander on mounting the throne, had added, out of favour, those of his father to those who had previously at-



tended upon his own person. The costumes of this interesting corps consisted of an embroidered coat over which was worn a crimson cloak, the trousers being of light gray cloth or soft deerskin. High boots of pliant leather, adorned with silver spurs, covered and protected their lower extremities, while some, in imitation of the Companions, wore helmets with waving plumes; others, more modest, being content with soft hats and sweeping ostrich feathers. As the grouping of Philip's and Alexander's pages had but recently been effected, it fell out that many were unknown to each other, and so the presence of Theba, who, disguised as a page, had that morning joined the King in pursuance of her previous determination, did not excite notice or remark.

Thus Alexander's army was organized, and early on the morning in question it set out, amid the cheers of the multitude and the inspiring strains of martial music, on the first of his memorable campaigns. Camping as night approached on the bank of the Lydias, the fitful light of the torches and camp-fires, while serving their purpose, rendered objects scarcely distinguishable; and it was then, as she had planned, that Theba, apparelled as a page, appeared and made herself known to the King. Approaching his presence as he completed the evening sacrifice, a chaplet of oak-leaves encircling his brow, she threw herself on her knees

before him, and in this humble attitude presented the open missive with which the Princess had provided her. And thus it tersely ran, according to the fashion of the time:

"Eurydice to the King, health. With this I again commend the youth Pelopidas to your friendship and protection; and this for recent services rendered our royal house, of which you have knowledge, and for other great kindnesses extended to Philip of glorious memory in the past."

Reading the short missive, Alexander raised the young page exclaiming:

"It is indeed as the Princess says, sweet cousin. Recent kindnesses and sacred ties of hospitality and friendship long antedating your time and mine make you a welcome guest at my court," and putting his arms about the shrinking page he kissed her on the mouth as was the custom among equals.

"Your welcome is more gracious, oh King, than my worth or any service past or present merits," Theba faltered, deep blushes suffusing her face and neck.

"Your name is all-sufficient to commend you to my love and that of my people; for Philip when a youth and unfriended on being sent a hostage to Thebes, lingered there in want, his life in danger, until knowledge of it coming to the ears of Pelopidas, your ancestor, he sought him out and gave him his friendship and a habitation in which to

"To what office about my person do you incline, if only in that way I can evince my friendship?" the King smiled.

"I would choose, oh King, that which will leave me some freedom of action, for neither my life nor that of my people incline me to the seclusion of the cabinet."

"Bravely said, cousin, for the open air best befits men of courage and action," the King agreed, delighted.

"If it be your pleasure," she went on, much relieved, "I would wish to ride with you when you hunt, and be near you in camp and on the march."

"That fits exactly with my desires, cousin," the King laughed.

"And, if I may, wait upon you when you sup?"

"I could not eat were I to so demean my hospitality, nor would it be seemly, for the pages are privileged to dine with the King, and you, being both guest and page, shall take precedence of all, so far as it accords with your desires."

"In all you say you fill my heart with gratitude, oh King, yet while I would have your protection I ask—as a favour—that it be without expression different from that shown to those about me."

"Have your way, cousin, save this, that your life shall have such seclusion and preference as becomes a prince, accustomed to the splendour of a life more regal than anything our poor country

affords its kings. There, do not say more, but let me have my way in part as Pelopidas had his with Philip," the King insisted, his chivalrous nature responding with gratitude to an opportunity to return in part an obligation of hospitality and friendship long deferred, and paying it have about him one so attractive in person as he perceived Pelopidas to be. For Theba disguised as a youth was not less noticeable than as a maid, and her costume, while seemingly no different from that of the others, was of superlative splendour in the richness of the material of which it was composed, conforming in this respect to what she believed the King would expect in a representative of the most opulent family of Thebes, a city at once the richest and most luxurious of all Greece.

In this way Theba's new life began, and Alexander, regardful of his duty as host, bade Demetrius set apart the spacious tent of Philip, the old King, for her accommodation, blazoning thereon the insignia of Thebes that its privacy might be inviolable. This disposition having been made, and the King being pressed to give audience to the officers of the army concerning the affairs of the camp and the movement of the troops on the morrow, Theba was at last able to take her leave, but not until Alexander, putting his arms about her, kissed her as he might have done a younger brother, saying:

"Later, on the march, cousin, I will have opportunity to talk with you respecting your family and its fortunes since my father was its honoured guest."

As Theba withdrew from the King's presence, accompanied by Demetrius, Lysimachus, who had been an attentive listener to all that had been said, approached the young page and bowing with stately dignity, exclaimed:

"I am the King's friend and tutor, Lysimachus, of whom you have perhaps heard, and as such I salute you and give you welcome to the camp."

Hearing him Theba stopped, much inclined to laugh at the deference paid her by the aged courtier, remembering, as she did, their encounter on the plain near Edessa the day of the King's enthronement.

"I am deeply grateful, Lysimachus, for your name and station have long been known to me as they are to all Greeks," she smiled graciously, greatly relieved that he had not penetrated her disguise. Nor was it strange, for her abundant hair was gone, and in its place her head was covered with short curls that now seemed almost black, while her costume and arms and the careless air with which she bore herself suggested a light-hearted soldier, intent only upon adventure. As such she appeared to Lysimachus, and so regarding her he continued, with amiable warmth:

"It may be that I can be of some service to you, a stranger in the country, and if so I trust you will remember that I am your slave."

Thanking him, Theba continued on her way, pleased at the encounter, for underneath the affectation and exaggeration of the aged tutor she recognized the kindly nature that caused Alexander to treasure him all his life.

"A desirable acquisition, this wealthy page," Lysimachus chuckled, turning to Clearchus after Theba's departure, "for these Thebans live well, and have, withal, an unquenchable thirst. But differ from us in this all-important thing, that they have the wherewithal to satisfy their gluttony, while we must be content today with remembering what we had yesterday, or perchance the day before. They have, think of it, Clearchus, wines of every favoured land, and food in such profusion and quality that one hungers at the thought—succulent partridges, poultry fed on deviled snails, young ducks, marjoram, pennyroyal, daw's-coats, teal, sand-peeps, geese, hare, foxes, weasels, moles, hedge-hogs, venison, and eels fattened on chicken-liver! Such things, Clearchus, are as common to them as tough beef to us, and what I name are only the lighter courses which they supplement with more substantial viands, of which you will gain some hint when this young Theban prince—for your true prince is he who has money and a hunger to

spend it—invites us to sup with him, as he shall at an early day. Meanwhile," the old man grumbled, "we must stay our present hunger with mutton and sour bread, and an onion to give them flavour," and turning on his heel he dejectedly sought his tent.

## CHAPTER XXI

### HAPPENINGS OF THE NIGHT

GUIDED by Demetrius, Theba made her way in the fading twilight to the tent assigned her by the King, a lofty structure standing upon an eminence at the extremity of the camp. Expressing her astonishment at its size and evidences of comfort, Demetrius explained that it was one Philip had used in later life when ailing from wounds, or desirous of greater privacy than was possible about the royal pavilion—and this last not strangely those thought who were familiar with his habits and ever-increasing love of ease. Oval in shape, the inner chamber or sleeping-room—for the tent was divided by curtains of heavy crimson cloth—contained a couch of cedar wood, on which soft woollen blankets were spread; the other articles, while few in number, being in keeping with the old King's love of comfort when the circumstances of his ever-recurring marches and battles permitted him some hours of repose. In the outer room a couch occupied a prominent place; the floor of beaten earth, being covered with Syrian and Indian rugs, the furniture of the room indicating Philip's love of the ornate luxuries of life.



Surprised at what she saw, Theba said:

"I fear the King will be displeased when it comes to his knowledge that you have brought me here."

"No, 'tis his command and to his great delight that what he thought a piece of cumbersome baggage, brought along to satisfy the superstitious fancies of Philip's old soldiers, can be made to serve a purpose that fits so aptly with his desire to please you," Demetrius explained, but with absent and constrained manner, as if his mind were far away, intent upon other things.

Presently taking leave of the pseudo page, he shortly returned with two slaves, a man and his wife, and bidding them to attend to her wants, as if they were his own, he coldly excused himself, saying that urgent duties required his presence elsewhere.

Partaking lightly of the evening meal, Theba presently dismissed the attendants for the night, and throwing herself on the couch, all her strength left her with the absence of the excitement that had hitherto served to buoy her up. Now, alas, she clearly saw how powerless she would be to serve the King or guard him as she had hoped. Nothing, it was apparent, was to turn out as she had believed, and as her helplessness grew upon her, bitter and regretful thoughts filled her mind to the exclusion of all else. The Princess Eurydice she might have served, and perhaps protected

from the cruel machinations of Lyncestes and the wicked Queen, and that was clearly her duty, but responding to a wayward impulse, born of her love for the King, she had forever separated herself from her benefactress, and doing so would perhaps bring harm on him she had thought to serve. Thus she lay, disconsolate, and as the noises of the camp died out and the night wind swept the desolate plain in mournful gusts, she cried aloud in anguish, calling on the gods to protect and comfort her in her helpless desolation.

While sorrowing in this way, her form shaken by the despairing sobs that choked her utterance, the cloaked figure of a man silently entered the tent, but oblivious to the world, she neither heard his coming, nor the exclamation to which he gave utterance on beholding her abandoned attitude. Stopping short, surprised and perplexed by what he saw and heard, the intruder stood for a long time motionless, the fierce light in his eyes giving place as he gazed to one of wonder and then of tender pity. Overcome, he retreated a step, intent upon escaping unobserved, but ere he could effect his purpose, some new access of sorrow seeming to burst her heart, he uttered a cry, and running forward fell on his knees before her, exclaiming in a voice choked by the emotion that overpowered him:

"Theba, Theba, what sorrow, what unimaginable wrong, rends your heart?" and clasping her in his arms, Demetrius, for it was he, sought with tender words and gentle caresses to still her grief. But when she made no response he presently went on as if crazed: "You do well not to answer me, as you did well to disregard my love—you whom I treasure so devotedly, and yet with so base a spirit that forgetful of your gentle nature I came here in a rage to kill you while yet I thought I loved you," and burying his face in his hands he sank down beside her couch.

"If you came to kill me, why do you weakly forego your purpose?" she exclaimed with sorrowing voice. "'Twould be a kindly act, for I have wished to die and fear alone has held me back—But your coming and its purpose," she cried in despair, suddenly arousing herself, "gives me courage to do what I have so long meditated," and grasping the dagger in her girdle would have plunged it in her heart had he not snatched the weapon from her hand.

"No, no, you shall not die; both gods and men forbid so horrible an act," he cried, striving to soothe her.

"Not when life is without object, or is dishonoured in its purpose," she sobbed.

"Your life without object, and its purpose dishonoured! You, Theba, who are all gentleness and

unselfish love, whose every thought is concerned with the welfare of others?" he chided.

"If I am what you say, why did you meditate my death? No! No! Touched by my loneliness and sorrow your heart melted and you were diverted from your just purpose. No, let me die, for I am condemned by gods and men for my too great forwardness," she sorrowed.

"Forgive me, for I was demented, crazed by a nameless fear born of my love and causeless jealousy; and so, forgetful of myself and your unhappy plight, plunged forward upon an errand so wicked and uncalled for that my heart no longer beats when I think of it," he pleaded.

"'Tis your love alone that excuses me, brother, for I am not different in any way from what you thought."

"My all-selfish passion blinded my eyes, but purged of its base impulse, I see you as you are, and so bid you live and wait with me the coming of happier days."

"Your love, hopeless as my unhappy life, bids me sever the tie that binds you to a fate so cruel and unending. Yes, better far for me to find rest in death than that you should endure a life so pitiful," she murmured, in a voice so hopeless that, unable to endure it longer, he clasped her in his arms, crying out in a frenzy of passion:

"I know you cannot love me, Theba, but I may still be near to watch over you, and find life and hope therein. Some time," he went on with sorrowing voice, "though I know not when nor how, it will be different, or if not, I am content forever to be your slave—my love—for so I must call you though it has no meaning in your ears."

"You almost tempt me back to life, brother, as you have many times before, there is such forbearance and gentle sweetness in your nature," she smiled, affected by his words.

"If I am as you say 'tis because of you, for I have naught to commend me but my love; but in that I shall cherish you to the end, whatever fate befalls our unhappy lives."

"You should be loved, Demetrius, for your true and noble heart, and sometimes my soul inclines that way, as if I must clasp you in my arms and cry, I love you; but with the impulse there suddenly springs up within me a nameless terror, as of some dreadful barrier that intervenes and forever separates our lives," she said with melancholy pathos.

"I cannot understand it more than you, my love, but often it has seemed to me as if, unconsciously, you live in a wild, fantastic world, having no reality and wholly apart from your real self."

"It may be so; I only know that I am changed from what I was, as if somehow the will of an-

other had, unknowingly, found lodgment in my brain, and so controls my every thought and purpose."

"'Tis most strange."

"Yes; where my mind was once free and unconstrained, it now has but one impulse and that seemingly apart from natural inclination or what my reason would dictate," she said, turning away.

"How did it come about, love, that you remained a slave when you had but to make yourself known to secure your freedom?" he asked, meditating on the past.

"I cannot tell you that, my brother, nor would it profit you to know," she said, crimsoning, thinking of her great love for the King.

"Of your enslavement, sweetheart, how was it that you fell into the hands of our people, and this I ask that I may serve you, though there be no hope to me in the doing of it?"

"There was nothing strange about my enslavement, for it was no different from that of thousands of others who, like myself, are entrapped by the chances of war and carried away to a life of bondage."

"Tell me of your life ere Cheronea," he coaxed, as if in that there might be a clew to the mystery of her being, of which she had just hinted. "Trust me, dearest, for in no way will I seek to influence the purpose of your life, though by doing so I could

change all the current of your thoughts and make you love me as I would wish."

Thus urged she told him of her happy and unfettered life in Thebes, and finally of how she was struck down upon the battle-field, and the coming of the godlike youth. And long she dwelt upon this last, and with a fever of earnestness as if she somehow believed the deities who governed the affairs of men were privy to its happening.

Hearing her through, he mused long over what she had told him, but regarding the strange and sudden perversion of her mind, he could make out nothing. It was as if the bondage that held her were due to some remissness of the gods, and had its origin in the moment of her awakened consciousness on the field of battle; but how, or why it was so, he could not tell.

Thus they sat side by side, she busy with thoughts of the past and the divine vision of her life, and he intent upon solving the hidden mystery of her undoing, until at last, in bitter anguish, unable to make anything out of it, he turned to her:

"'Tis all most strange and unaccountable, love, and only the gods know its import and what will come of it."

"Think you it is true as I have often thought, that there is some mysterious power that controls my mind and heart, that only the gods can fathom or remedy?" she questioned with trustful confidence.

"I know not whether there be or no, only that the past we cannot change nor understand, but the future—that, dearest, is all our own."

"I would it were as you say, brother, but it is of the future that I fear, for I am as a helpless child lost in a labyrinth of terrors—and yet I would not change nor make it different were there indeed a way," she concluded, her eyes lighting up as if recalling some past resolve or hidden thought.

"Nor need you, love, if you wish it thus; and if you will but confide in me as if I were in truth your brother, I will give your present life such freedom and enlightenment that it will be to you like a summer's dream," he cried with confident voice, remembering her sorrowful forebodings, and striving to awaken her anew to cheerfulness of life.

"Can you do this, Demetrius, when all seems so hopeless and unnatural?"

"Yes, love; if, as I say, you will but trust me."

"That I will gladly do," she cried, clasping her arms about his neck and kissing him in gratitude for his words.

At this caress, so loving and yet so meaningless, his heart seemed pained to bursting, but controlling himself he went on:

"The provision that the King has all unconsciously made for you in his gratitude offers you such life apart from the camp as you may choose. The slaves who attend you are my own, bound to



me in love, and so you may live in strict seclusion when you wish, joining in the affairs of the camp and its bustling life only when you are that way inclined."

"Can I really be abroad, go and come as others do, with no one to question or suspect me?" she smiled.

"Yes, that I will make easy for you, love; indeed so smooth your path that the glory of our free life may be yours with none of its cares and discomforts," he promised.

"And may I really hunt with the King and you in the silent forests, as I once did with my father; let fly an arrow or throw a javelin, be abroad at the first dawn to watch the rising sun as it tips the sea and sky with gold, see it fade away at night beyond the distant mountains, be abroad unquestioned in the open country, join in the long day's march, ford the streams with others, swim my horse it may be, lie before the King's tent at night if danger threatens him; be near him always, hold his cloak, carry his spear, hand him his sword?—Can I do these things and nothing be said, brother?" she cried with breathless haste.

"Yes, and with all grace and harmlessness, love," he smiled.

"That is the way I would have it, brother, for the country is as the breath of life to me; yet I am not here because of that, Demetrius, but that, with you,

I may protect the King, nay, save him from Philip's fate," she divulged, her mood changing.

"Save the King from Philip's fate! What mean you by that?" Demetrius asked in deep surprise.

"Think you it will be different with Alexander than with his father, if men who hate him and may be benefited by his death have free access to his person? No! And it is the hope that I may save him from such fate that brings me to his camp."

"That you may guard him?"

"That and naught beside," she said blushing, her eyes aflame at some hidden thought that flashed across her brain. "Yes, that I may be near him, Demetrius, may protect him, save him from his ever-present enemy."

"His enemy! Whom do you mean?"

"Who but Lyncestes and those like him whom the King unwisely admits to his confidence."

"'Tis a confidence more seeming than real, love," he laughed.

"Yet the trust, however seeming, affords opportunity to do him harm. 'Twas thus Philip reasoned, making convenience of his life to accommodate some purpose of policy; and Alexander, taught nothing by the lesson, follows without thought in his father's footsteps."

"Lyncestes hates him, that I know, and it might indeed fall out as you imagine, but together we may contrive to set such guard about him, and without

his knowing it, that no traitorous hand can reach his person."

"Now indeed I love you," Theba exclaimed, clasping his hand and pressing it to her lips as he arose to take his departure.

Accompanying him to the door of the tent, all unconscious, hand in hand as lovers might, they looked out on the sleeping camp, no sound disturbing the deep stillness of the night save the cry of the timber wolf that impatiently waited tomorrow's movement of the army, and the feast to follow from the refuse of the camp. But not all had sought repose after the fatigues of the day's march, for about Alexander's tent many torches gleamed, and men could be seen coming and going, intent upon the urgent affairs of the State. Seeing this and naught besides, Theba fretted, as if she would not have it so, murmuring:

"See! The King still wakes."

"It is always thus, love, for he seems not to need sleep nor rest, but works on unceasingly."

"Wherefore such urgency, Demetrius?" she questioned, disquieted.

"I know not, but 'tis as if he believed he had but a short span of life, and must accomplish what would in another fill the space of many years."

"And think you it will be thus—with his life?" Theba asked, as if she feared it would be so.

"I know not, but 'tis as if he must hasten if he would accomplish all he dreams of ere yielding the power to another."

"Kings do not dream, brother; only women dream."

"And Alexander not less than they, for his mind is a phantasy of things inexplicable to other men; hopes seemingly vain and unreasonable; ambitions beyond all comprehension—till 'tis time to act."

"And then?"

"The phantasies fade away, giving place to sober thought. Then the visions born of his mother's hot blood give place to Philip's sense, and so he will succeed as his father did, but far beyond, for his imagination will lead him on to adventures Philip would never have dreamed of undertaking."

"What a glorious thing it is, Demetrius, to be a King,—young and full of life. To dream dreams, to follow visions, and approaching them have the heart to do great things; to live with the sword between your teeth, and planning mighty deeds, have brave men about you to follow where you lead! Oh, brother, I would you might some time be such a King!" she cried, as if in prophecy, embracing him in the abandonment of the moment.



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE MOUNTAIN SHEPHERD

WITH the approach of day, whirling mists from the Thermaic Gulf overspread and obscured the plain whereon the army lay encamped, but with the first gray of morning the shrill notes of a bugle sounded, and ere it died away another and another caught up the call, until in a moment the wide encampment rang with the piercing cry. Aroused by the familiar sound, the soldiers who had sought the shelter of their tents issued drowsily forth, while those who had slept in the open, wrapped in their cloaks,—as if in protest of the effeminacy of their fellows,—bestirred themselves preparatory to the morning meal which the slaves were busily preparing. While the camp was thus stirred, tents were struck and quickly packed on waiting animals, so that within an hour of the bugle-call the plain was cleared and the army had again turned its face to the south. With the stir and marching of the troops, strange and discordant sounds filled the air, the barking of dogs, the whinnying of horses, the braying of angry pack-mules, the cries and curses of slaves and camp-followers, and, mingling with it all and in pleasant contrast, the notes of flute and fife, as the musicians, clothed

in picturesque costumes, preceded the moving columns.

Theba, who was early on horseback, watched with eager interest as the troops swung into line, and when the King presently made his appearance she lost no time in hastening to his side. The pallor of his face gave evidence of the late hours and the exacting work of the night, but directly he saw the marching soldiers, his countenance lighted, as if in their movements he found both rest and life.

"Come, cousin," he smiled, welcoming her approach, "a brisk canter will quickly warm us back to the life of yesterday!" and putting spurs to his horse, surrounded by his escort, the cavalcade swept like a whirlwind across the still scarcely discernible plain.

"How glorious the King looks," Theba whispered, turning to Demetrius as Alexander doffed his plumed hat to the shouts and salutations of the marching troops.

"Yes, a youth in years, he already looks upon the veterans of Philip's time as his children, beloved companions in the great undertakings he meditates," Demetrius answered.

A half-hour's ride, fraught with many happy imaginings upon Theba's part, brought them to the banks of the Haliacmon, a brawling river having its troubled source in far distant mountains to the

west, but that here flowed in tranquil depths near the southern border of the warlike Kingdom. Dismounting, the King occupied himself with the final preparations for the crossing of the army, the batteries having been transferred to the southern shore during the night. Everything being thus made ready, the main army on its arrival an hour later was quickly transferred to the opposite bank, so that ere the day was half over the troops were safely crossed and had resumed their rapid march.

Of all the curious things Theba saw, the part the King took therein most interested her, and when the crossing had been accomplished, and Alexander, surrounded by a troop of horse, left the marching columns and took his way to the wooded hills, she followed after with a heart filled with delightful expectations. Drawing rein before a peasant's hut in the center of a sheltered valley, the King turned to her, exclaiming:

"If my messenger has done as he was told, we shall find something awaiting us here to satisfy our hunger."

"And a nipping hunger, too, agape with thirst, the fruit of too long abstinence and much hard riding," Lysimachus interposed in a fretful voice, as he sat his horse, bent with fatigue.

"Be patient, master; a biscuit and a cup of wine will make you young again," the King laughed,



"Hear him, oh Bacchus; a cup of wine! A shriveled biscuit! Ye gods, have men no stomachs save for spears and tedious marches? A skin of wine I crave, oh King, and with it such store of food as would satisfy the appetite of a savage," the old man cried, winking at Theba.

The hut before which the King halted was not different from that of the rude peasantry of the country, save that it was of greater extent, and had about it an air of thrift out of the common. Constructed of stones of varying size roughly cemented, it was protected by a roof of thatch which towered high above the squatty structure. About the hut and the buildings of which it formed a part there ran a wall of stone loosely laid, as a protection against predatory bands of robbers and the wild animals that frequented the forests bordering the cultivated valley. Entrance to the enclosure was obtained through a gate of solid oak, bound with iron, and before it, hat in hand, stood the proprietor of the place, bronzed to a dark brown by his free and open life.

"Hail, oh King, and welcome!" he cried, saluting the royal visitor with his right arm, the stump of which only remained.

"Health and life to you, Petra!" the King smiled, as to a friend, and turning to Theba, who sat her horse beside him, added: "This man was a guardsman in my father's service, and when, at the storm-

ing of a fortress and the disastrous retreat that followed, Philip lost an eye and so was blinded and in danger of capture, Petra, with his arm hanging by a thread, caught up the helpless King with the other and bore him to a place of safety. Remembering the kindness, Philip gave him this fertile valley, and the man being thrifty as well as brave, has added to his possession until now he is rich in both slaves and cattle."

"But has he a well filled larder and skins of rich red wine, oh King?" Lysimachus interrupted querulously, "or does he scrimp in such things to our undoing? Slaves and cattle are good tax-producers, but make poor provender for adventurous soldiers, however rich the frugal peasant may become by their fructual increase," he went on, his mind intent on the filling of his empty stomach.

Bidding him be patient, the King spurred through the open gate, greeted by the baying of a pack of Molossian hounds, guardians of the farmer's herds by day and his lonely hut by night. About the wide enclosure and attendant buildings slaves busied themselves with their accustomed duties, some of whom smiled amiably upon the King as he looked down upon them, while others cast upon him glances of such malignant hatred that Theba laid her hand on her sword, fearing they meditated him harm. Captives from the barbarous tribes Philip had subdued in his wars, there were

among them many of Grecian mould, who bore in their faces the marks of a refined and gentle life, but all without exception subject to sale or barter like the herds they cared for,—save that they were not of equal worth, a half-score of the forlorn wretches not having the value of a serviceable horse.

In the pens that divided the enclosed space were the flocks of Petra, kept from the open field, it was apparent, in pleasurable expectation of their inspection by the King. In one, sheep were herded, in another, cattle, and in still another, horses and mules, used for riding and as pack-animals, for there were no beaten roads in the land save between the more populous centers. In a rough building apart from the others the farmer stored his grain, and on its earth-beaten floor oxen were to be seen threshing out the abundant harvest. On one side a cider-press reposed, and beside it a huge vat wherein slaves trod out the wine from the purple grapes, lightening their monotonous labour with the ancient hymns of their native land. The principal building of the group, and more pretentious than the others, was divided into two great rooms. In one set apart for daily use the provisions of the household were stored: olive-oil in leaden receptacles; cheese piled high in wicker crates; and hanging from the oaken beams succulent pieces of bacon, savoury hams, clusters of figs, beets, onions, and

other products of the fertile valley. Reaching to the roof were sacks of grain ready to be ground in rude mortars scooped out of the trunks of hollow trees, and farther on, and exhibiting Petra's abundant wealth, there stood a carding-machine, and near it, and of recent use, a primitive spinning-wheel. Of sleeping accommodations for the slaves and attendants there were none save undressed skins piled high in a corner of the room to be used at night for beds as need required. Having free access to the great room, and pleasurably sharing its use, were pigs, guinea-hens, peacocks, chickens, and other domestic fowls, coming and going at pleasure, and with the noisy hilarity of their species. This spacious room, with its crowded contents, had formerly been Petra's home, until in his great wealth and pride he conceived the thought of adding to it one of even greater size for the exclusive use of his immediate family.

In front of the entrance to this last, Petra's wife, a fair-haired, comely woman in middle life, stood blushing, courtesying before the King. She wore a peasant's garb of woollen cloth, with jacket of tanned deerskin, strings of terra-cotta beads adorning her shapely neck and arms. Beside her in a row, with staring eyes and mouths agape, stood her sons, six in number, bare of leg and clothed only with a single garment of lamb's skin.

"What, you beggars," Petra stormed, noticing their attitude, "is that the way you receive your King?"

Hearing him, they flopped incontinently upon their knees, remembering all too late the well-taught lesson their father had been at pains to teach them.

"Future Companions, oh King, or Phalangites, it may be," Petra commented.

"Is it to that you look forward?" the King asked, greatly pleased.

"Yes, war is the calling of men,—there is no other. The thrift of trade, the art of squeezing the buyer or skinning the seller, are occupations fit only for cripples," he scorned, waving the stump of his arm. "Come, lads," he cried, turning to his children, "show the King what I have taught you."

Whereupon each youth, grasping a javelin, hurled it with unerring aim at a target placed some distance away.

"Well, well, that is but part," Petra roared, in anger, as they resumed their former listless attitude, staring at the King.

Heeding the reproof, each ran and took a bow from off the wall, and fitting an iron-pointed arrow, ranged themselves as before, and on Petra's giving the word, let fly their darts at the target, every missile coming within the circumference of its nar-



BEFORE THE KING



row border. Then, as if at last interested and glancing at the King for his approbation, they loosed the leathern slingshot each carried about his neck, and fitting a pebble in the hollow receptacle, turned and shot it at a target of the size of a man, and with the same success as before.

"Bravo, comrades!" the King laughed, throwing them a purse of gold, delighted at what he saw.

"Such is their daily lesson, oh King, and as becomes men," Petra boasted.

"Have they no other?" the King asked.

"Yes, of trifling things, it may be—at odd hours. A bit of language treasured by some Grecian slave; or a scrap of writing,—but all in moderation and inattentively, lest they be diverted from things of real importance. Thus, oh King, I fit them for predatory strife or real war—and as becomes their glorious names."

"And what have you named them?" Alexander asked, delighted.

"Philip—one and all. The big beggar with the scar, he on the right, is Philip, plain; the next Philip the Second, and so on to the sixth," Petra gloated, eying the lads.

"'Tis a pity the great King should not have known he was so honoured," Alexander commented, smiling.

"Oh, he knew; 'twould not have been seemly to have done it under cover," Petra grinned.



"So you told him?" the King laughed.

"Yes, and in all haste, and he, responding with like promptness, sent a present to each in turn. To one a horse, to another a yoke of oxen, and so on to the end; but of the naming of the midget there, I carried the news to him myself."

"And what did the King do?"

"Oh, he laughed and gave me a fine mare, bidding me come again, he cared not how often. No, no, we did not forget to tell the King, did we, sweetheart?" Petra chuckled, stroking the flaming cheek of his abashed wife.

Laughing, delighted with all he saw and heard, Alexander dismounted and entered the house, preceded by his host. In the great room in which he found himself a broad table ran with oaken benches on either side, its glistening surface piled high with bread, and such variety of food as the abundant larder of the hut afforded. For hospitality was a sacred duty in the country, a curse resting on all who denied it. It was a simple faith frankly fulfilled, and the weary traveller coming upon the hut of a mountain peasant knocked at the door knowing full well he would be welcomed and protected. This, however, was oftentimes the sole measure of security in the more remote districts of the country; for except in offices of hospitality, the half-savage shepherds, dwelling far apart in sequestered glens, had little regard for the lives of

strangers, fearing nothing on earth or among men—save a dead man!

Beside each wooden plate on the well-filled table there was a leathern cup filled to the brim with wine, and for the King, one of bull's horn overlaid with beaten silver. About the board and in convenient proximity to the guests, and as if inviting them to drink their fill, were earthen jars filled with wine, which the slaves refilled as the supply ran low. Near at hand there stretched a deep cupboard, its deer-skin curtains drawn apart revealing the reserve of stores and delicacies that the table would not hold. In the center of the room, and giving it an air of comfort, a cheerful fire of pine-cones glowed, an opening in the thatched roof permitting the smoke and much of the heat of the room to escape. In one corner, and put aside for the moment only, were shepherd crooks and pipes of reed, blackened and soiled with years of patient use. About the walls, that nothing might be wanting, torches fixed in sockets were ready to be lighted, and on convenient shelves, leaden disks and sea-shells filled with oil, each with its protruding wick of flax or vegetable fibre. Hanging conspicuously from wooden pegs about the smoke-stained wall, and as if in ostentation, Petra displayed his many cloaks and garments of tanned skins fashioned out of the hides of the bear and other wild animals of the country. Such was the rude hut in which

the King found himself, differing only in degree from those of the Macedonian peasants generally.

Removing his cloak, the King seated himself at the head of the table, his mind occupied, it was apparent, with the perplexing details of the coming campaign and the army that marched beside the Gulf, its face turned toward Greece. Calling Petra to his side, he asked:

"Have you seen aught of our enemies hereabouts?"

"Yes, oh King; this morning at break of day a detachment of Thessalian horse skirted the edge of yonder meadow," Petra said, indicating the spot.

"In what direction were they going?"

"To the south, and at full gallop, as if flying from an enemy."

"Or bearing news of the departure of the army from Pella and its probable crossing of the Haliacmon this morning?"

"It may be, oh King."

"Is there no news of the Thessalian army?"

"None save 'tis said they closely watch both the defiles, through one of which you must pass."

"If they do naught but watch it will not matter, and we may thank them afterward for not impeding our march," the King smiled.

But while he chatted with amiable unconcern with those about him there came the rush and uproar of a body of approaching horsemen, and pres-

ently Ptolemy, striking the gate with his spear, cried out, asking instant admittance. Recognizing his voice, the King bade Petra admit him, and on his doing so the officer, springing from his horse, hastily entered the room where the King sat.

"What news, good or bad, brings you in such haste?" Alexander asked, as Ptolemy stopped, awaiting the King's pleasure.

"Bad news, I fear, oh King."

"Out with it, then, and quickly, for we have dined well, thanks to Petra, and are in a mood to listen and act afterward," the King smiled.

"A messenger from Clearchus, oh King, riding hard, reports that the ships reached the Vale of Tempe without accident or delay, whereupon he at once disembarked his troops, as you commanded, but only to find the pass blocked by the Thessalians and their allies."

"Well?" the King interrogated as the messenger hesitated.

"Much surprised, he formed his men in order of battle and instantly assaulted the obstruction behind which the enemy rested. Repulsed, he reformed his force and charged again, and so again, but hopelessly."

"Then the enemy must be in great force?"

"Yes; and our spies report that beyond the first obstruction there is another, and beyond that still others, and so on the whole length of the gorge,

each one heavily guarded. And so it has fallen out, oh King," Ptolemy went on reluctantly, "that the expedition on which Clearchus was sent to occupy the pass and hold it awaiting your coming has, through no fault of his, unhappily miscarried."

"What disposition has he made of his force now that the venture has failed?" the King inquired, his brow overclouded at the disastrous news.

"He has established a fortified camp at the mouth of the pass, and there awaits your commands."

Hearing him, the King remained silent for a long time, meditating on what he had heard. At last turning to Ptolemy, he said:

"If Clearchus with three thousand picked men can make no headway against the Thessalians, it will cost us half our army and a month's delay to force the pass."

"Such is the purport of the word brought by the messenger."

"That the pass is impregnable?"

"Yes, oh King."

"And so it has always proven when guarded by brave men—and of such timber is the Thessalian forces made up," the King added.

"So their enemies have always found," Lysimachus ventured.

"The Vale of Tempe being closed, there is but one other way open to us, Ptolemy," the King resumed.

"The Perrhæbean Pass?"

"Yes."

"But that is hardly less difficult than the other, the snow-clad mountains rendering the rugged gorge of Petra easy of defence."

"Bah! A most inhospitable spot, master, where wine freezes ere it reaches your mouth and you cut your food with an ax," Lysimachus jeered, as he poised his fingers above a delicate morsel in the steaming dish before him. "Better perish, oh King, fighting bravely in the Vale of Tempe than die of cold amid Petra's snow-clad heights!"

"'Twas thus Xerxes entered Greece, and by the advice of Alexander, of sacred memory," some one said.

"But the pass was first made easy by the patient skill of the Macedonian King," Demetrius explained.

"Yes, but it may be forced without the destruction of half our army, which we shall need unimpaired once we gain entrance to Greece," the King responded.

"But it will still cost many lives, and weeks will elapse before entrance can be effected," Ptolemy foretold.

"And the Greeks, meanwhile gaining heart, will have taken advantage of the delay to occupy Thermopylæ and the lesser passes, so that we shall in the end have a long and hard campaign, when I had

hoped to be at Corinth within a month without the loss of a man. But such thoughts are only worthy of children," the King excused, "and the Vale of Tempe being closed, there is no way to reach the plains of Thessaly save by the mountain pass, however difficult the undertaking may be."

As this change of plan involved the recalling of Clearchus' force and changing the direction of the main army of invasion, a deep silence followed, every one being intent on the consequences that this derangement of the King's plans foretold. At last, when the silence had continued for some time, and the King sat brooding, loath to give the order that the change involved, Theba, who sat beside him, turned to him, her face suffused with blushes:

"There is a way, oh King, about Mt. Ossa, to the south and east, by which you may avoid the Pass of Tempe, and so reach the Thessalian plain without opposition."

"No, cousin, in that you err, for the armies that have marched from the north this thousand years and more have never found ingress to Thessaly save by the Vale of Tempe or the Perrhæbean gorge," the King explained, with gentle speech.

"But, unknown to the world, there is such a way, oh King, traversable by men and animals, skirting the rugged slopes of Ossa to the east and south," she persisted.

"You speak, cousin, as if from your own knowledge."

"And so I do, oh King. The path follows the slopes of Ossa through seemingly impenetrable forests, sometimes skirting the sea, but more often bordering close upon the mountain-side. And so it winds its way beside rugged gorges and deep ravines, but ever rising to the heights that lie beyond Ossa to the south. Thence it dips this way and that, but with secure foothold, to the plains of Thessaly," Theba described, forgetting her embarrassment in remembrance of the picturesque road and the use the King might make of it.

"How know you this, cousin—have you yourself traversed the path?" the King questioned, astonished at what she said and the conviction that she spoke truly.

"Yes, many times, oh King, for my family have long owned the vast domain that borders Ossa to the east and south, and there have a lodge, where I have often stayed with my father, hunting and exploring the forests and half-obliterated paths. But the road is known to no one save my people and the retainers of our house, knowledge of it having been kept secret, the better to preserve the rare game that finds a home in the forests and deep mountain defiles of the district."

"Tell me, cousin," the King said, deeply impressed with what he heard, "how the existence of



such a road could be kept from the knowledge of the people of the neighbouring plains."

"'Tis not a road, oh King, but a path broken in many places, oftentimes wholly obliterated, it would appear, yet always following a given course, as I say, one end terminating near the gulf and the other in the wooded heights above the Thessalian plain."

"Have you the clew to this path?"

"Yes, oh King, and as clearly as if marked upon the beaten floor of this hut."

"Can you guide us through the labyrinth, so that traversing it we will find ourselves in the rear of our enemies?" the King cried, enraptured.

"Yes, as I have described."

Deeply stirred the King asked:

"Is the path of which you speak at present passable for the army, or what hindrance is there to be overcome?"

"There is no obstruction save the small trees and tangled shrubbery purposely left as a blind to mislead the chance wayfarer; but of such little consequence that a thousand men may quickly open the road throughout its whole length," Theba related.

"And will you show us this mysterious path,—this long-hidden way, the secret of which has been treasured so carefully?" the King asked, with the abandon of a boy, animated at the hope held out of entering Greece ere preparations could be made to repel his forces.

"Yes, in that and in all things else that I may," Theba smiled, happy in the expectation, no longer regretful that she had been led to join the King.

"If you can do this, cousin, you will have saved me from untold shame, perhaps the loss of Greece and all my hopes thereafter," and rising to his feet, he cried, putting his arm affectionately about Theba's neck: "Comrades, behold your general—but of the hidden path," he cautioned, "not a word, lest knowledge of it coming to the Thessalians, they may again forestall our action."

Taking leave of Petra and his wife after bestowing upon the latter a chain of gold he took from about his neck, the King mounted his horse, and with his escort set off at a gallop to rejoin the army. In this way, and all unconscious of Lyncestes' treachery, Theba was able to thwart the traitor's effort to delay the King's entrance into Greece until such time as the country might be united and armed to meet him. As the cavalcade set off, Theba, anxious for Demetrius' approval of her forward act, sought his side, and approaching him was made happy by the smile of approval which he gave her.

"You have saved the King's cause from untold disaster, love," he cried, pressing her hand, "for to have been delayed or thwarted in this his first campaign would have encouraged his enemies and arrayed Greece and all the world in arms against him."





## CHAPTER XXIII

### CLEOPATRA'S DEATH

ON the arrival of the Macedonian army at the Wolf's Mouth, for so the Vale of Tempe was called in ancient times, the situation was found as Ptolemy had described it. Seemingly at a loss what to do, the King rode back and forth in full view of the Thessalian army, as if surveying the ground and seeking an advantageous position for his batteries. When this had gone on for some time and the inspection was apparently completed, the batteries were brought to the front and placed as if in contemplation of an early attack. Deceived by the King's apparent purpose, the Thessalians were misled, and acting under this misapprehension, hastened to meet the proposed attack by concentrating all their forces in defence of the pass.

While Alexander's army lay outstretched on the narrow plain that lay between the mouth of the

gorge and the open waters of the gulf, only those known to be personally loyal to the King were posted as sentinels between the opposing forces, lest knowledge of the real purposes of the King should be conveyed to the enemy. This was Theba's contriving, and timely, for late in the watches of the second night a Lyncestian soldier—a creature of Lyncestes—was discovered stealthily making his way to the enemy's lines; and upon being challenged for an act so suspicious, sprang to his feet and ran with all speed toward the Thessalian entrenchments. In vain, however, for Demetrius, who secretly followed him, hurled his javelin at the flying fugitive, killing him on the spot. Thus it fell out that the attempt to inform the enemy of the movement to skirt the base of Ossa was frustrated, and the Thessalians, resting confident in their position, made no effort to counteract the flanking movement then well under way.

Having disposed his forces in the threatening manner described, Alexander set out, accompanied by Theba and an escort of Companions, to mark the obscure road of which she had told him in Petra's hut. Nor did Theba find this difficult, for after penetrating some distance into the apparently trackless forest, she pointed out the beginning of the hidden path, and thereafter, with scarcely a moment's pause, the cavalcade proceeded at a gallop until it reached the heights beyond Ossa. From

the summit of this lofty range Pindus' towering mountains to the west were clearly discernible, and directly below, clothed in emerald green, the fertile plains of Thessaly. Halting a moment to breathe the sweet mountain air and rest their tired horses, the cavalcade descended the western slope of the range to a point where the open plain could be seen beyond the trees beneath which they rested. Congratulating and thanking Theba, the King, greatly elated, retraced his steps, and ere a day had passed a strong force of soldiers was dispatched to clear the half-obstructed path, which work, as Theba had foretold, they found no difficulty whatever in accomplishing.

When in this way the hidden road had been opened to the King's army and every preparation made to march, Alexander, with intent to further deceive the enemy, caused the camp-fires to be lighted when night approached, at the same time ordering a strong force to advance as if meditating an immediate assault of the pass. Afterward, when darkness had set in, he silently collected the bulk of his force, and following the hidden road, his troops reached the plains of Thessaly unopposed, ere the rays of the sun had lighted the top of Olympus' snow-capped mountain.

When the Thessalians were informed of the presence of the Macedonians in the rear of their force, it was at once apparent to them that their

army was in a trap from which escape was impossible. Recognizing the situation and the eminence of the peril, they forthwith dispatched envoys to the King with power to negotiate a treaty of peace between the two countries. And Alexander, being desirous above all things of avoiding a conflict, met their advances with such hearty accommodation and good-will that their hostility was disarmed, and a lasting convention entered into.

When this arrangement had been consummated, the King marched with all speed to Thermopylæ, where representatives of numerous Grecian cities hastened to meet him. Conscious that they could not oppose him in the field, they conferred upon him the title of Imperator, as they had before on Philip; and the Athenians, fearing he might direct his march upon their city, were quick to offer excuse and apology, according him divine honours, as they had his father in the past. Meeting them in amiable mood, he accepted their overtures of peace and good-will, after which he continued his march to Corinth, where the cities of Greece, save Sparta, sent their representatives clothed with power to confer upon him the office of Captain-General.

When on the march through Greece it became noised abroad that the attractive young page who had joined Alexander's army was of the family of Pelopidas, who had befriended Philip in his youth and abandonment, the Macedonian soldiers, over-

joyed, could not pay Theba sufficient honour. But when her part in circumventing the enemy at the Vale of Tempe was made known by the King, she became from that time forth the idol of the army, its acclaim greeting her wherever she went.

During the stay of the army at Corinth, awaiting the completion of the King's negotiations with the Grecian cities, Theba made known to those about her the wonders of the historic city which she had often visited; and among other things she told them of the cynic Diogenes, who had his home there. And because of what Theba said of him and his curious life, the King and many of the officers and soldiers were led to seek him out, and this to the great delight of some and the no less great disgust of others.

"Do the Greeks call this beggar from Pontus a philosopher, Pelopidas?" Lysimachus sniffed, on his return from the visit, worn with heat and thirst. "Bah! An overfed beast, who simulates a regard for the simple life out of pure laziness and love of notoriety. An arrant knave, friends," he protested, waving his arms and addressing the assembly generally, "who lives on what he can pick up, and finds cheap lodgings in an empty barrel beneath the crumbling walls of the gymnasium."

"A most unwholesome being, unwashed and unkempt, fit food for flies," Seleucus, who was young and fastidious, cried out in disgust.



"In Pella he would be ducked for a vagrant, and afterward put to cleaning mules," Perdiccas, a severe disciplinarian, proffered.

"A beast!" Ptolemy grinned.

"That may be, but a beast of wit and versatility of dialogue, you must admit, when the vermin of which he is the life stirs him to activity of speech," Lysimachus interrupted, argumentatively, annoyed that his companions should agree with what he had said. "And the gaping crowd," he went on, "seem never to tire telling of his wise sayings and pert acts, and among other things, and curiously, that he buries himself in hot sand in summer to become inured to heat, and rolls himself in the snow in winter that he may not feel the cold. But however it may be, 'tis clear he despises clothes, for he has none worth mentioning, and of other things men think necessary he has not one."

"Yet 'tis whispered that the enchantress, Thais, who has great notoriety throughout Greece because of her abandon and voluptuous beauty, is unduly fond of him," some one ventured.

"She may be, I know not," Lysimachus answered, dryly, slaking his thirst from the wine-skin that rested on his knees.

"Upon what does he feed, this wise cynic?" Demetrius asked, casting a sly glance at Theba.

"Raw meat, aswarm with flies," some one explained.



ALEXANDER SEEKS DIOGENES



"Flame of fire, yes, and when gorged to repletion he crawls into his filthy receptacle or lies outspread in the sun, until nature awakens him again to torpid life," Clearchus recounted, with his customary vehemence.

"Purple and bloated, he is moribund from overfeeding and inertia," Nearchus interjected, taking a fling at the Greek idol.

"Yes, and some day the buzzards, scenting their prey from afar,—for you can smell him a long way,—will pounce upon him and thus at last he will answer a purpose he himself would justify," Antigonus added, as if there could be no other end.

"Did the King notice him?" Theba asked, greatly disconcerted.

"Yes, more than he noticed the King."

"What! Was he insolent?" she cried, as if responsible for the disrespect.

"'Twas this way, Pelopidas," Ptolemy laughed, "when the King, wishing to be polite, asked the cynic if he could do him a favour, the pert beggar answered with drawling speech, 'Yes, by stepping from between me and the sun.'"

"What did the King say to that?" Demetrius asked, reassuring Theba with a look.

"Oh, he laughed and drew away, holding his nose."

"Did he say naught?"



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"Yes, he said that if he were not Alexander he would be Diogenes; and so we came away sickened with the odour of the repulsive being and the filth in which he lives."

"Did the King mean what he said, do you think?" Theba questioned, with a troubled look.

"No, 'twas to please the Greeks, for the King is a stickler for baths and clean linen, believing cleanliness is allied to greatness."

"And is this Diogenes much esteemed by the Grecians?" some one asked.

"Yes, his followers believe him to be wise beyond most men, and his sayings are treasured as we do drops of precious wine," Lysimachus explained, lifting the wine-skin to his lips.

In this way and others of like curious import, the army found entertainment while lying idle in the ancient city of Corinth. When, however, the active co-operation of Greece, save Sparta, had been secured, and all other matters arranged according to Alexander's wishes, he determined to continue his marches into the Peloponnesus, for the purpose of overawing the Spartans with the sight of his invincible army. Collecting his forces, therefore, he marched from Corinth in all the glorious panoply of war, he himself, clad in burnished armour with shining casque, leading the advance. About him were his chief officers and the royal pages; and following them, in magnificent

array, rode the Companions, clad throughout in armour, the Phalanx following, its bucklers and lofty spears shining like polished silver in the noon-day sun. After these came the auxiliary troops and pack-animals, seemingly in never-ending numbers, and so stately and imposing was it all that the envoys of the Grecian states, overcome by the inspiring sight, and forgetting for the moment their hatred, burst forth into uproarious and long-continued cheers.

In this manner, and according to the purpose of the royal visit, the army traversed the Peloponnesus to the great surprise and wonder of its people. Having in this way displayed the strength of the Macedonian arms, the King faced about, and made his triumphal way back to the capital of his own country, preparatory to the campaign he meditated against the Thracians, whom Philip had fought, but with incomplete results.

Reaching Pella, greatly elated at the complete success of all his plans, grievous news awaited the King; for in his absence, it appeared that through some cunning trick Olympias had gained possession of Cleopatra's person, and put the unhappy woman to death with her remaining child, the Princess Europê. Of the manner of it, however, there were many whispered accounts, but none clearly certified to the public, so that her taking off remains to this hour a mystery to men. Some said that Olympias,



as in a previous instance, had surrounded Cleopatra's palace with her Epirot guard, and having gained entrance thereto, had strangled the little Princess on its mother's breast, despite the latter's struggles, afterward hanging Cleopatra from the ceiling of her room. Another story, still more horrible—and thought to be true—ran that she had burned Cleopatra alive on a grate cunningly contrived for the purpose. But of the exact particulars of the tragedy no one seemed to know, or if they knew would not reveal the truth out of respect for the sorrowing King. Only it was surely known that Cleopatra, living quietly at her home and caring for her child like any peasant mother, had been foully murdered by Olympias—and that was all.

Hearing the story, the King, enraged and grieved, shut himself up in his room, where for days he would see no one save the slaves who attended upon his person, lamenting with bitter regret Cleopatra's unhappy ending and the deep disgrace the cruel act attached to his mother's name. Emerging at last from his seclusion, awakened to the need of staying the hand of the ruthless Queen lest in his absence she should torture or put to death others who had offended her, he sent the half-savage Epirots back to their own country, and publicly clothed Antipater, the governour, with such autocratic power as was necessary in the absence of the King to maintain peace and good order

within the State. This disposition of the government, and Antipater's part therein, became from that time forth, during Alexander's lifetime, a permanent feature of the civil and military government of Macedonia.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### THEBA RESCUES DEMETRIUS

ON his return from Greece, Alexander remained at Pella several weeks, fitting out his army for the campaign against the Thracians, who had meanwhile declared war and were openly threatening the invasion of his country. To the north, the predatory tribes occupying that region were also astir, meditating concerted action against the new King. To the west, the warlike Illyrian tribes were everywhere bestirring themselves in answer to the call of their King, preparatory to declaring war with a view to securing possession of the stronghold of Pelion that Philip had erected as a barrier between the two countries. And thinking but lightly of Macedonia's youthful monarch, they were outspoken in their determination to carry the war into the heart of Macedonia, even to the walls of Pella. Threatened from every direction, the Thracian situation appearing the more urgent because of the advanced preparations of the people of that warlike region, Alexander determined to give these formidable enemies his first attention; and accordingly in April, eight months after his accession to the throne, set his army in motion.

And this without seeing his mother, for Olympias, after putting Cleopatra and her child to death, had removed with her court to Edessa, in fear of Alexander's anger when the crime should finally be brought to his knowledge. Thus it happened that Theba was unable to learn anything concerning the Princess Eurydice, who was in attendance on the Queen, for there was little intercourse between the new and the old capital, and none at all between the King and Olympias; and this last not strangely, for while he would not do anything openly against his mother, or give public expression to his thoughts concerning her acts, it was known he was enraged beyond measure over Cleopatra's cruel death. Olympias, satiated with the murder of her rival, rested in her mountain retreat awaiting the hour when the King's anger should cool, giving herself up meanwhile to the superstitious practices of her nature, spending her days with astrologers and soothsayers, or in the practice of the mystic rites of Bacchus in the gloomy forests about Edessa.

Apprehensive for the safety of Eurydice, and unable to communicate with her in any way without disclosing the deception she had practised, Theba questioned Demetrius, and having learned all he had heard, asked:

"Think you the King approves the Princess' betrothal to Medius?"

"I know not how it is, for Medius, being absent in Thrace, has had no opportunity to speak to him; and so everything is in doubt."

"Will he not join the army when it reaches Thrace?"

"Yes, without doubt."

"In that case he may approach the King."

"That I am sure he will lose no time in doing, though with what result I know not; yet I cannot but think the King will look with favour on his suit," he added.

"So I once believed—but now—" Theba hesitated.

"And now?"

"He has seemingly no thought save for the things that will contribute to the glory of his country—as if he were Philip, after twenty years of warfare," she complained.

"'Tis the consciousness of power,—of ability to achieve the things of which he dreams,—and their need," Demetrius commented.

"Of that I am sure—but about Medius and Eurydice?"

"If their betrothal crosses not the King's purpose he will favour it, for he loves them both."

"Love! He has no heart, Demetrius, or it is dead within him because of some unrequited passion," Theba sighed.

"Not unrequited, but hopeless—if indeed it still survives," Demetrius said, thinking of Roxana.

"If it is requited, then 'tis not hopeless?"

"Yes, because the earth separates him from her he loves."

"But if his passion survives, its consummation is only delayed."

"It may be."

"It will be, for his ambition to conquer the world will not content him unless, finally, there be added to it the possession of her he loves. One will follow the other, and lest he fail in either he despoils himself of all he possesses to fit out his followers for the conquests he meditates."

"From love of them rather."

"He loves his friends, but—"

"And hates his enemies."

"One cannot hate where one does not fear. No, he gives all he has that his friends may make provision for those they leave behind, and so be content to follow him without question wherever he leads them."

"It is like him—and kingly."

"Yes, and, as if the gods inspired him, that he may attain the end he seeks."

"Though stripped of everything?"

"No, not all."

"What will remain?"

"His hopes, he says, when his friends would dissuade him from impoverishing himself that the families of his followers may not want."

Thus they discoursed as they followed on in Alexander's train, Theba's love having no way diminished in the months that had passed; but now it was as if the King were a god to be worshipped from afar. For means for protecting his life within the camp having been perfected, her fears for his safety were allayed so that she was content to follow, seeing little of him, but much indeed of Demetrius. The latter, consumed with his passion for the gentle maid, continued to watch over her, but with no outward expression of his devotion, save that of trusting friendship, which she gladly welcomed and returned; and if in his despair he did not go to the Thracian war determined to seek death, it was that he might live to guard his love in the strange life upon which she had entered.

Such was the situation as the army took its way to the east, the King's days occupied inspecting, drilling, and marshalling his troops as he rode back and forth or watched their movements from the roadside. Entering Thrace, the savage tribes, intimidated by the strength of the invading army, offered no concerted opposition; but while apprehensive of the result of open battle, they lost no opportunity to harass the King's progress. In crossing the streams of that mysterious and little-



known land, they everywhere assailed his force from the opposite shores, and when opportunity offered, with floating rafts piled high with blazing faggots of Pierian pitch, set fire to his boats and pontoons. As the troops traversed the narrow defiles or marched beneath overshadowing heights, they were assailed by the barbarians with flights of arrows, and every form of projectile the nature of the country rendered possible. But of the attacking enemies there was no sign save here and there a glimpse as they sought cover in the deep forests or fled by obscure paths, mounted on their hardy mountain ponies, swallowed up in the wooded hills and inaccessible cañons of the country. Such was the nature of the warfare practised by the alert and savage foe, notwithstanding the protecting force that preceded the advance of the army or sought through outlying scouts to guard its flanks. These last, scouring the country on either side, were no sooner out of sight than the barbarians, emerging from their hiding places, assailed the marching columns afresh as if no measures had been undertaken to prevent their forays.

In the detachments of troops that preceded the army or sought to guard its flanks, Theba often took a part, undeterred by danger or hardship, the blood of generations of brave ancestors asserting itself despite her sex and great desire to remain in obscurity. Nor could she be dissuaded by Demet-

rius, and the King, thinking it only fit to gratify this descendant of a warlike race, let her lead the detachments or follow in their train, as she chose. Clad in armour, and leading a body of light cavalry, she skirted the edges of the marching columns or led the far advance, the slaves Demetrius had assigned her, following with her baggage and attendant camp outfit. In this way, the army entered Thrace, following the banks of the Nestus, crossing and recrossing the great river, as the nature of the country or the obstructions of the enemy rendered necessary. Reaching a point far to the north, the marching columns crossed the mountains to the east to find themselves at last in the heart of Thrace. But without meeting an enemy, save the fierce barbarians who watched and waited on the overlooking mountains or in the depths of the forests and swamps through which the army marched. These harassments of the enemy, however, served in no wise to retard the progress of the army, for early and late the King pushed on as if, as Demetrius had said, he looked forward to the work before him, and not knowing the time allotted in which to accomplish his purposes, would allow nothing to impede his efforts. Hurrying forward, despite the enemy's efforts to delay his progress, the King finally brought his army to the foot of Mt. Hæmus—known to us as the Balkans. Here, on the summit of this towering range of mountains, the

Thracians had congregated their forces to give the King battle. Believing their position unassailable—for it was approachable only by a steep and rugged path—they were nevertheless prepared to crush their enemy with heavy projectiles, in the event the Macedonians should finally overcome the seemingly impossible ascent.

Overjoyed that he had at last found an enemy to stand and face him, Alexander lost no time in preparing to assail the formidable height; and in the accomplishment of this the Phalanx were directed to follow the narrow path that led to the summit, while lighter armed troops were ordered to climb the mountain on either side, as best they could, aiding the Phalangites in every way possible. In this manner, and as directed, the Phalangites, meeting the fierce opposition of the barbarians, sturdily ascended the rugged height, and so at last neared the summit of the great mountain. Whereupon the Thracians, seeing that all their efforts to retard the enemy's advance had proven fruitless, precipitated their mountain carts heavily loaded with stone, down the steep decline, one following the other with such swiftness and precision that nothing could withstand the force and weight of the projectiles. In this dire extremity—and as the King had directed in advance—the Phalangites threw themselves flat on the ground and protecting themselves with their long oblong shields,

one overlapping the other like the scales of a fish, the projectiles passed over them with the roar of thunder, but without killing a single man. When in this way the barbarians had shot their last bolt, the men of the Phalanx sprang to their feet and with a cry of rage and victory, charged the mountain afresh, seeing which and conscious of defeat, the barbarians turned and fled down the opposite slopes of the mountain. In this way and through the simple device practised by the Phalanx, the great height, hitherto believed to be unassailable, was surmounted and victory achieved.

Disappointed in their expectations and greatly surprised that they should have been overcome so easily where they had every advantage, the barbarian chiefs, no way discouraged, collected those who had fled, and adding the troops of the warlike tribes to the north and east, congregated anew, sheltering the army thus gathered in the midst of the impassable swamps and tangled forests of the level country. Here occupying unassailable ground, they confidently awaited Alexander's further movements. Apprised of the situation of the enemy by his scouts, and the impossibility of approaching them with his heavily armed troops, Alexander collected his bowmen, darters and slingers and adding to them a sprinkling of other troops to give the array the semblance of an army, he led them to the attack; and with such apparent

determination to overwhelm the Thracian force that the latter were fully assured that the whole Macedonian army was in their front. When in this manner the King's forces had been for some time hotly engaged with the Thracians but without being able to make any headway whatever, they wavered and finally, as if conscious that defeat awaited them, began a rapid and apparently disorderly retreat.

In the midst of this seemingly disastrous rout, Demetrius was severely wounded and his horse killed. Seeing his plight and danger of capture, Theba, who rode near him, hastily dismounted, and calling upon the troops among whom he rode, they lifted him to her horse. Giving the bridle reins into the hands of a soldier, she bade him hasten with all speed, and rallying the flying soldiers about her, the enemy was held in check until Demetrius had effected his escape.

Elated at their seeming victory, the Thracians followed hotly after the Macedonians, the latter flying with greater and greater speed as the retreat progressed. When in this manner the barbarians had been drawn into the open country on ground where the Macedonian cavalry and heavy infantry could operate, the presence of this reserve force was suddenly disclosed to the pursuing Thracians. In the concerted attack of the Macedonians that followed, the Phalanx occupied the centre, while the

cavalry and Companions attacked both the flanks of the enemy. Disorganized and surprised by the trap into which they had been lured, the enemy presented a brave front, but at last perceiving the hopelessness of the struggle, they threw down their arms and fled, seeking safety in the forests and swamps from which they had so unwisely ventured.

Recalling his troops from the pursuit of the flying enemy, Alexander collected his forces and resumed his march to the north with all speed, hoping to reach the Ister—the Danube—ere Syrmus, the Thracian King, who was fleeing before him with the remnant of his army, could reach the river and cross to the heavily fortified island where the women and children had sought refuge, guarded by a considerable Thracian force. Disappointed in this and his means of crossing in face of an alert enemy being insufficient, the King suddenly broke camp and continued his march down the river with a view to crossing and attacking the Getæ, savage nomads who occupied the country to the north and who had collected an army with a view to taking part with the Thracians in the effort to drive back the invading force. Crossing the river at night with a part of his army on rafts made of inflated tent-skins and such boats as he could hastily collect, the King completely surprised the enemy, who, taken unawares, fled without battle, carrying off their women and children on the backs of their

horses. Destroying the village where they had congregated, Alexander offered up fitting sacrifices to the gods for the favour accorded him, and losing no time, recrossed the river the same day.

Meanwhile news of his surprising marches and repeated victories had spread abroad in the country and when it was added that he had crossed the great river in the face of an armed enemy—a thing never before attempted or thought possible—Syrmus and the chiefs of the numerous tribes, terrified by the presence in their midst of so formidable a foe, lost no time in sending envoys to Alexander begging him to accept their submission and assurances of future friendship. Confident that the victories he had achieved would insure permanent peace, Alexander met their overture with kindly acceptance, granting them all and more than they asked.

Thus the campaign ended, but while perfecting the peace and reorganizing his forces after the long and fatiguing marches, his camp was visited by a group of Gallic chiefs from the mountains to the northwest who, having heard of his exploits, were anxious to meet the victorious young King. Greatly admiring the stalwart warriors and their independent bearing, Alexander was at pains to prepare a great feast in their honour. As the banquet progressed and events of common interest were talked of, he asked one of the chiefs if his people, who



THE GALLIC KING THREATENS LYSIMACHUS







were noted for their courageous bearing in battle, knew what fear was; whereupon the Gauls answered with one voice, raising their eyes in apprehension, to heaven, that their only fear was lest the sky should fall upon them! Surprised at the nature of the reply and the earnestness of the response, Alexander smiled with amiable interest, but Lysimachus, who was seated at the table and in close proximity to a wine skin, cried out in protest, overheated by what he had drunk:

"What! Do not these half-clad savages fear our glorious King, he who overcomes the mountain heights and far-spreading rivers as the eagle cleaves the sky?"

Furious with rage at the insult, one of the Gallic chiefs, springing to his feet, thundered:

"No, bare-bones, we have no such fear, or we would not be here," and loosing his dagger, he advanced on the offending pedagogue with upraised weapon.

White with fear, Lysimachus sought refuge behind the King's couch, exclaiming with quavering voice:

"Hold, gentle sir, for the gods forbid that I should have spoken thus except in idle pleasantry."

Staying the enraged chief with uplifted hand, Alexander said:

"Harm him not, oh King, but accept his excuse in good part, for he is privileged by age and serv-

ices rendered me in the past to speak his mind, offend whom it may."

"Nay, I meant the great chief no harm, the gods forbid," Lysimachus excused, watching with furtive eye as the gigantic Gaul stood irresolute, coldly surveying him.

Muttering some inarticulate word of scorn, the irate chief faced about, and filling a bull's horn with wine, turned to the King:

"He who is privileged to speak his mind before Macedonia's King cannot offend a Gallic chief," and bowing with stately dignity to his host, emptied the gigantic bumper at a draught.

Complimented and pleased at this happy ending, the King filled a bumper, and returning the salutation of his guest, emptied it as the other had done.

Fearing some further outbreak, Theba hurried to the side of Lysimachus, and taking hold of his cloak led him away, the King smiling his approbation. Placing the frightened pedagogue in the care of his friends, and being now free for the evening, she hastened to Medius, who, after re-joining the army, had been grievously wounded in the storming of the Balkans and was still confined to his tent.

"The gods protect and bless you, gentle youth, for coming here to relieve my lonely life," Medius called out on seeing her; "for while all others make

merry, I lie here alone, a prey to melancholy broodings."

"I thought those who loved liked best to be alone," she smiled.

"Why alone?"

"That they may dream dreams of the absent one," she laughed.

"And so it is, but to be dragged day by day at the tail of the army hearing the shouting and the storm of battle, but bearing no part, comes near to drowning every passion save impatient rage," he said, scanning his wounded limb.

"For shame! She would not have answered thus, nor pass the hours in discontent, but happily, if she might but repeat your name, believing you would at last be wholly hers."

"Men have not such forbearance; yet do I love her even beyond the love of honour gained in glorious war," he protested, as if no greater proof of affection were possible.

"Now you speak like a true lover, and I would she might hear you, to soften the leaden sky of her life and the fear she has of losing you."

"And does the gentle soul love me so much, think you?" Medius murmured, his face lighting up with happiness.

"Her love for you is such that all else is as nothing, for so she has often confessed to me."

"To you?" Medius interrogated, surprised.

"No, to Theba, whom I think of always as myself, so much is she a part of me," the other answered, confused.

"And she confessed that to Theba?"

"Yes, that her devotion and love is so great that scorning the preferment of higher station, she clings only to you."

"What mean you by higher station?"

"That which the Queen seeks to bring about."

"What is that?" he asked, surprised.

"Her acceptance of Lyncestes' proffer of marriage and your rejection," Theba answered bluntly, impatient at Medius' lack of spirit in pressing his suit with the King.

"My rejection and her acceptance of Lyncestes!" Medius stammered.

"Yes!"

"Lyncestes, the craven who contrived the murder of his King!" he gasped.

"Yes, promising her every honour if she will yield, and threatening her with disgrace if she refuse."

"And what response did she make?" Medius asked, terrified, reflecting on the deep import of the other's words.

"That she loved you, and would wed only where her heart inclined."

"May the gods bless and favour her for the brave answer, though I be all unworthy the love of

so glorious a being," he sobbed, overcome by his weakness, burying his face in the couch.

"You are not unworthy of her, if pressing your suit with the King, he yields consent; or refusing, you wed her whether or no," Theba decided.

"The King gave his consent but yesterday, and I, happy in my ignorance, dreamed not that another was favoured."

"Did he not tell you of the Queen's preference for Lyncestes?" Theba asked, somewhat mollified.

"No, for on my asking him bluntly for Eurydice he laughed, and embracing me gave his consent, so that I did not dream he had already been importuned in behalf of Lyncestes."

"Yet so it was, and I greatly fear the Queen's anger when news of the King's consent comes to her ears."

"She will do nothing now that he openly favours it."

"Child, did the King's good-will and the safeguards he placed about Cleopatra and Europê protect them from the Queen's vengeance?" Theba warned.

"But the Princess being without offence, the Queen will not seek to do her harm."

"The Queen's savage passions have so grown upon her that she no longer makes distinctions, but hates all alike who oppose her wishes; and so, failing to force compliance upon the part of Eurydice,

she will, I fear, seek other and less harmless means to achieve her end."

"What shall I do, I, who was before so happy and trustful in the King's consent?" Medius groaned, the perspiration standing in great drops on his pallid brow.

"Return to Pella the instant your wound will permit, and lose not a moment in wedding your love," said Theba.

"I cannot, for the King, having given his consent would think me disgraced if I threw up my command and returned home on such an errand at this time," Medius faltered, sinking back on his couch.

"Yes, and to lose his favour is to lose all," she assented, "but delay not your going a moment when chance favours; or, what is better, have her come to you if the movements of the army permit, and so consummate your marriage ere something intervenes to render it impossible."

While they were thus discoursing, much depressed over the future, Jaron, the leech, entered the tent, and seeing Theba, doffed his hat, as he might have done to the King—or a woman. And thus he always greeted her, and from that, and the look of surprise, amounting to terror when he first encountered her in the King's train, she knew that he had penetrated her disguise. But having been the preserver of her life at Edessa, and being a

*THEBA RESCUES DEMETRIUS* 293

wise and kindly man, he gave no hint of what he knew, except to treat her always with a gentle courtesy he showed to no one else, not even the King.

Welcoming him and imploring him to minister with all care to Medius' wound, Theba excused herself, to hasten to the tent of Demetrius who was still crippled from the wound received in the flight before the pursuing Thracians.







## CHAPTER XXV

### BEFORE THE WALLS OF PELION

ON emerging from her tent the morning after the banquet, Theba was surprised to find the camp astir where before all had been peace and quietness. Hastening to the King's tent, she met Clearchus, who, on her asking the meaning of it all, cried out:

"'Tis something that'll cause your heart to beat with joy, Pelopidas."

Smiling, she waited for him to explain.

"Yes," he continued, elated, "we march on the morrow to the relief of Pelion."

"Pelion?" Theba questioned.

"The fortress that guards the Devol."

"And the Devol?" she smiled.

"'Tis a river that cuts through the mountain range that divides Macedonia and Illyria."

"Why guard it?" Theba questioned.

"To retain possession of the road running beside its banks along which all traffic between the two countries passes."

"Have we possession of the road?" she persisted.

"Yes, through possession of the fortress of Pelion, that guards it on the Illyrian side of the mountain."

"And is that threatened?"

"Yes, as often before, for beneath its walls the two countries have had many glorious battles, the river at its base running red with blood."

"Call you war glorious against the skin-clad barbarians of Illyria?"

Lysimachus, who was an impatient listener, grumbled, for having greatly relished the quiet the camp had enjoyed for the last few days, he was no way inclined to look upon the hardships of a long and hazardous campaign with complacency.

"Yes, nothing could be more inviting," Clearchus exulted.

"Think you, master, that the Illyrians' declaration of war is inviting, as Clearchus boasts?" Lysimachus, being free to question, asked the King who that moment emerged from the privacy of his room.

"Yes, the war being inevitable, it clears the atmosphere."

"Could not peace have been secured by the present of a few cattle and sheep to the robber hordes?"

*BEFORE THE WALLS OF PELION 297*

Lysimachus said, viewing the situation with apprehension.

"No, war cannot be evaded, for the Illyrians have long fretted at our possession of Pelion, blocking as it does the impregnable pass of Devol and putting an end to their robbery in the past of our isolated shepherds on the western frontier," the King answered, respecting his ancient tutor, as was his custom, as if he were an equal.

"But will they not have captured the fortress and reopened the pass ere we can march thither?" Lysimachus fretted.

"It may be," the King answered absently.

"Then why so much haste, Master?"

"That in the event they achieve their purpose ere we can reach the seat of war, we may stay their further progress, and attacking in our turn, retake what we have lost, adding such further guarantees as will protect our country in the future," the King proclaimed.

Listening attentively to all that the King said and greatly pleased at the long march the campaign promised, Theba was worried as to the disposition to be made of Medius and Demetrius, who were still confined to their tents with their ails. Interrogating the King as to the disposition to be made of them, he replied:

"They ask that they may accompany the army, claiming, and truly perhaps, that the march will

cure them more surely than the air of Pella or the rude accommodations of Thrace. And acquiescing in their wish, I have caused such arrangements to be made as will lessen the strain of the long march."

"Will the march take us through Pella and Edessa?" Theba asked, thinking of Eurydice and Demetrius and their forlorn love, hoping it might be as she said.

"No, 'twould cause delay, and haste is urgent," the King answered.

"But what other way is there?" Lysimachus asked, anxious to return to the quiet and comfort of the capital.

"That to the north and west."

"But that is impossible, Master, as there are no roads, and the country is mountainous."

"Where roads are lacking we will make them," the King smiled, "and if the country is high the air will be invigorating and so our soldiers will be strengthened and fit to overcome the Illyrians, who have taken advantage of our misfortunes to plunge us into a causeless war," the King sternly declared.

"But if there are few roads, Lysimachus, game will be the more plentiful because of it," Clearchus comforted.

"How does that benefit me? Can I shoot from a waggon or the back of an ambling ass?" the old man queried.

"But you may eat what we younger men bring to camp."

"Think you there are deer and partridges in the mountains?" Lysimachus asked, comforted by the promise of an abundant table.

"Eye of Cyclops, yes, as plentiful as rabbits about Pella."

Overjoyed at the prospect of the chase Clearchus promised, Theba sorrowed that Demetrius and Medius could take no part in the glorious sport, and reminded of their distress by her regrets, she hastened to their tents to aid in the preparations for their comfort during the long and harassing journey.

Conformably to the King's order, the army set out on its long march at dawn of the following morning, taking its way to the west through the rugged, mountainous country that we know as modern Servia. Overcoming all obstacles as the King had foretold, it at last approached the northern border of Macedonia, to find the savage barbarians of the neighbouring country congregating to impede its further progress. But happily in this emergency, the delay and attendant strife they threatened were avoided through the friendly intervention of Langarus, the King of the Agrianians, who contracted to hold the threatening tribes in control, leaving Alexander to go his way. Freed from this new enemy, the Macedonian army con-

tinued its march through the mountainous region of western Macedonia, finally reaching its objective point, the river Devol.

The pass beside this brawling stream that afforded the only means of intercourse between the two countries, to the King's great surprise, he found open and unguarded, the Illyrians by their neglect plainly inviting him to enter. And this evidently with the confident belief that should he do so, they, by closing it in his rear, would have him in a trap and completely at their mercy. As nothing could be accomplished except by actual conflict with the Illyrians, and as they could only be reached by traversing the pass, the King pushed forward with all speed lest the invitation to enter might be reconsidered. His march being unimpeded, he found himself the following morning, in a deep valley surrounded by mountains and confronted by the fortress of Pelion, which the Illyrians had recently taken and now occupied with a strong force. The overlooking heights which on the King's approach were apparently free from an enemy, once the King reached the sunken valley, were instantly aswarm with Illyrian warriors who, abandoning further concealment, descended in a body from the wooded heights, and pressing forward, closed the pass in the King's rear, cutting off his retreat and depriving him of the possibility of gathering supplies from the neighbouring country.

*BEFORE THE WALLS OF PELION* 301

This was the harassing situation of affairs, when the King was angered and mystified by a laconic message from Antipater, whom he had left in charge at Pella, reading:

"Antipater to the King, health. Yesterday, in the late afternoon, the barge of the Princess Eurydice was set upon below the old king's hunting lodge and her attendant slaves put to death and the vessel sunk across the channel of the Lydias as if to prevent pursuit. I have no clew to the perpetrators of the crime nor the reason for the outrage. Of the unfortunate Princess, who is missing, there is no trace. Mounted soldiers have been dispatched in every direction, and vessels sent to search the Haliacmon and the adjacent gulf, in hopes of finding some trace of the Princess. Of the result I will advise you in all haste."

Startled by the message and its direful import, the King lost no time in sending for Medius, who was now completely recovered from his wound. Reading the cruel message, the young officer was overwhelmed with grief and anxiety at the mysterious fate of her he loved, and recalling what Theba had said, did not doubt but that the crime was one of Olympias' planning. But of this he dared say nothing to the King, who believed the outrage to have been committed by the piratical crews that infested the gulf and adjacent waters. Gaining the King's permission, he determined to set out for



Pella with the coming of night, but having little hope of finding his love alive, believing her to have been murdered at the instigation of the Queen in revenge for the failure of the latter's plans.

Theba, when apprised of the melancholy event, hastened to the despairing lover, and entering his tent, discovered him busy with his hurried preparations. Bewildered and overcome, she could only put her arms about his neck in comfort of his distress. Calmed by her presence, and recalling what she had said as he lay wounded in the Thracian wilds, he turned to her as if she might somehow solve the strange mystery that surrounded the cruel disappearance of his love.

"I should have braved the King's wrath and gone to her, as you advised," he said, after showing her Antipater's letter, "but craven-like, counting the cost, stayed on. Now she is dead, while I live to weep and tell of my cowardice and neglect," he sobbed, his face flooded with tears.

"No, what I advised had no sense or reason in it whatever, for you would have been forever disgraced, and the King, angered at your perverse action, would have joined with the Queen in forcing the Princess to wed Lyncestes," Theba consoled.

"But what would their anger have mattered? We could have fled to Greece, and there consummated our union, defying both King and Queen," he raged.

*BEFORE THE WALLS OF PELION* 303

"Where would you have found refuge, Medius, for Greece lies like an open book in the King's hands?" she expostulated.

"If insecure there, we could have sought a home within the confines of Carthage or Rome, and so at last have lived in peace," he stubbornly persisted.

"A princess of Macedonia's royal house could not be thus hid away if Alexander, his rage rising to heaven at the indignity, was intent upon her return to her own country. No, such thoughts are idle and to no purpose when brave acts may yet reclaim your love," she said, with a confidence she did not feel.

"Do you think she still lives, Eurydice, my sweet love?" he cried, grasping at the hope held out.

"Yes, for what purpose could there be in putting her to death? Nor would the savage Queen thus dare the anger of Alexander by a crime so causeless and that so nearly touched his heart and the honour of the kingly house."

"What, then, is it she meditates? for that she contemplates some dreadful outrage there can be no manner of doubt," he mourned, relapsing into his former mood.

"I know not, unless, contriving with Lyncestes, they have conveyed her to some secure place, there to remain hidden until such time as they may finally accomplish their purpose, whatever it may be."

"But Lyncestes is here, and can know nothing of what has occurred."

"In that you but lightly regard his cunning and contempt of all manly things," Theba cried out with contemptuous scorn.

"What, then, is it they propose? Come, tell me your thoughts, and quickly, for every moment I tarry here strains my heart to bursting. On horseback, in the open air, pursuing my search, I may regain some part of the courage which I have so woefully lacked in the past," he lamented, burying his face in his hands.

"Lyncestes being with the King but furthers their contriving; for now no suspicion will attach to him, and the campaign, being over, he can return to Pella, and knowing the secret of the conspiracy, presently discover her hiding-place, and, doing so, claim her of the King as his reward."

"And the King, what will he do?"

"If she be compromised in any way—what can he do?" she hesitated.

"What you say stabs me to the heart, for in it I can see no end save her death," Medius stormed, his face white with rage and pity.

"'Tis not so bad as that, for, meanwhile, you may forestall Lyncestes' purpose by yourself discovering her hiding place. Return, then, with all speed to Pella, and divulging your plans to no one, use all your abundant riches to hunt her out,—and finding

*BEFORE THE WALLS OF PELION* 305

her, claim her as your wife. It may be," she encouraged, "that Antipater will achieve this ere your coming, for the outrage being consummated under his very nose reflects most grievously upon him, and because of it he will leave no spot within the Kingdom unrevealed."

"What, then, remains for me if he be thus thorough and yet is unsuccessful?" Medius murmured, as one in a trance.

"Spread your net abroad; search every hidden corner,—the cities that lie along the gulf or near its borders; for the wily Queen, knowing what would follow, has not sought a place within the reach of Antipater's arm. Searching thus, you will find some trace of her, for they cannot hope to conceal her presence if, leaving the sea, they seek a hiding place in the interior of the country."

"Oh ye gods grant me wisdom and guide me in my efforts," Medius prayed in anguish, and embracing Theba he ran from the tent, and mounting his horse set off at a furious gallop, the darkness of the night favouring his flight through the guarded pass.

As the days passed, it became apparent that the Illyrians contemplated nothing of an aggressive nature, but content with their impregnable position were determined that their enemy should take the offensive or, starved into subjection, finally lay down his arms. When the King became satisfied

that he could not induce the Illyrians to descend into the open field, and that their greatly superior numbers and strong position forbade an attack on his part, unless their alertness could somehow be overcome, he changed his plans and on the succeeding morning, apparently accepting the hopeless situation, the practice of arms and the usual routine attendant upon camp life, was taken up with sober industry. Marshalling his army in the narrow valley, the King manœvered his troops hour after hour as if on the plains before Pella, seemingly having no object in view save to maintain the alertness and vigour of his men. At first the Illyrians observed these manœuvres with the greatest suspicion but as they continued with no seeming object except to preserve the discipline of the camp, their watchfulness lessened until at last they looked on with idle curiosity only.

Perceiving this, the King suddenly formed the Phalanx in the shape of a wedge and precipitated it with tremendous force and speed against the Illyrian forces that guarded the pass through which he must retreat in order to reach a spot where his force would not be constantly threatened, and supplies might be secured from the adjacent country. Taken by surprise, the Illyrians gave way, but quickly rallying, the King found it necessary to go to the relief of his forces, charging the now alert enemy again and again and with such courage and



FORCING THE PASS AT PELION





## *BEFORE THE WALLS OF PELION* 307

persistence that the Illyrians were held in check until his army had effected its escape.

Retreating to a narrow plain midway of the pass and protected from the enemy by the mountain stream, Alexander waited, determined not to abandon the campaign until the recapture of Pelion had been effected. Thus several days passed, the activity of his forces being directed apparently to effecting their escape from the country ere destruction overwhelmed them. While he was thus actively engaged seemingly in organizing a hurried retreat, word was brought him in the middle of the night by his scouts that the Illyrians, believing the Macedonian army completely broken and only awaiting an opportunity to fly, had given themselves up to feasting and drunkenness over the great victory they had achieved. Satisfied of the truthfulness of the reports, the King hastily collected his light armed troops and in silence crossed the river and retraversed the narrow pass through which he had escaped, his heavy armed troops following with muffled arms. Reaching the edge of the valley from which he had retreated, he found the Illyrians had descended from the mountains and now occupied the abandoned valley, and in celebration of their victory, had given themselves up to abandonment and drunkenness. Conscious of victory, the bugles sounded the charge, upon which the Macedonians hurled themselves upon the half-



stupefied enemy with deafening cries; and the charge being followed by the whole Macedonian army, the Illyrians unable to organize effective opposition, their arms having been thrown aside in the delirium of the feast, hastily gave way; and the Macedonians pressing them from every direction, the defeat quickly became a rout. The Illyrian King, deprived in a moment of all his forces, save those who were within the fortress, sought not to prolong the struggle, but acknowledging defeat, set fire to the stronghold and under cover of the conflagration, effected his escape.

Giving over the day to feasting and rejoicing for the surprising victory that had been snatched from defeat and threatened annihilation, the King on the succeeding morning detached a part of his army to refortify and guard the pass, and marshalling the remainder of his force, set out on his return to Pella. But while traversing the pass beside the Devol, word was brought him that the city of Thebes had unexpectedly declared war, encouraged thereto by its Grecian neighbours and thinking but lightly of the young Macedonian King of whom nothing had been heard since he entered Thrace, four months before. Confident in their cause, the Thebans had banished or put to death the Macedonian residents in their city, afterward laying siege to the Kadmea, a great fortress that lay outside the walls of the city, occupied by Macedonian forces. In

this unexpected dilemma, so surprising and destructive to his hopes of immediately invading Persia, the King, without halting his troops or apprising them of the startling news he had received, turned abruptly to the south in the direction of Thebes, instead of following the highway to Pella as he had thought to do. Traversing the little frequented country of western Macedonia and following along the heights of Pindus, beside the tributary streams that fed the Haliacmon, the King reached and crossed the Cambunian Mountains into Thessaly; and pushing forward with unexampled speed, reached and traversed the Pass of Thermopolyæ, without his presence being suspected by the enemy. Continuing his rapid march, he suddenly appeared before the walls of Thebes, while its people believed him to be still in the little known regions of the far north. And coming he was not angered, but smiling and debonair, and such had been his mood throughout the terrible march, the successful termination of which was fraught with such vast consequences to him. Night and day, amid forest jungles and trackless wilds, he rode back and forth, encouraging his wearied soldiers and cheering their efforts with his presence, no detail of the march escaping his vigilant eye. And thus it fell out at the end that every man appeared in his place, elated and eager for whatever their glorious young King might call upon them to do.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### THEBA JOINS IN THE SEARCH FOR EURYDICE

ANXIOUS to save the situation and avoid an open rupture, the King established his camp some distance from Thebes; and this to the great delight of Theba, whose heart sorrowed for her native city. But when the Thebans, misconstruing the politic measure, opened their gates and attacked the King's forces, he was at last led to pitch his tents near the southern gate of the stronghold. Here he patiently awaited their friendly overtures, anxious to effect a peaceable solution of the difficulty. But the inhabitants, attributing his motives to timidity, mounted the wall, openly reviling his soldiers and determined, it was apparent, to precipitate a conflict.

In the midst of these grave dangers, when the storming of the walled city might be precipitated any moment, Medius suddenly appeared in the King's camp, but unable to gain access to Alexander, hastened to Theba's tent. She, seeing him distraught and dead with fatigue, cried out in fright, little regarding her words:

"You have failed in your quest, Medius, and Eurydice is lost to us forever?"

21

"Yes; lacking in every needed thing, as once I did in courage, I have failed in my quest and miserably, as you see," he groaned.

Leading him to a seat, she gave him a goblet of wine and seated herself beside him in silence, words failing her in her grief at the unhappy ending. Relapsing into a melancholy mood, he stared before him, vacant-eyed, seemingly unconscious of her presence; but when some time had passed and he continued to brood in silence, she laid hold of his hand, exclaiming:

"Come, Medius, if you be not too fatigued and the recital too grievous to bear, tell me of your melancholy search."

"There is nothing to tell save failure, and to recount that is to suffer again the despair of my unavailing efforts."

"Gained you no hint of her unhappy fate?" she questioned, striving to wake him out of his deep dejection.

"No, it is as if the sea had swallowed her," he answered shortly.

"Can it be that they murdered her, and that the plot of which we talked was only a vain imagining?"

"I know not, and yet it must have been, else I had discovered some trace of her," he lamented.

"Tell me of your search," she mildly urged, reluctant to admit there was no further hope.

"'Twas as if my life and honour depended on its thoroughness—and yet it failed," he responded, without animation.

"You searched the cities lying along the coast?"

"Yes, every one."

"And the country beyond?"

"The very fields."

"Left no place unexplored?"

"No, the army of spies I employed, intent upon the reward, spread themselves abroad, searching every city and hamlet on the gulf, and finding nothing, sought the interior, where they left no hiding place uncovered, the mandate of the King unlocking every gate and opening every door."

"I knew you would be no less thorough."

"And so I was."

"You found nothing,—no mystery unexplained?"

"No."

"No woman enthralled, spirited away, the creature of some sinister event, unproclaimed of men?" she went on, conjuring up the situation.

"No," he stared, his brain benumbed,—*"unless,"* he went on mechanically as if dreaming,—*"unless I except a forlorn and demented creature who was put ashore on the northern coast of Boeotia."*

"Well, what of her?"

"Being crazy, there was no mystery about it,—yet I followed wearily after as if some ray of hope lay in the discovery."

"Tell me of her," Theba urged, thinking she saw in the incident something out of the ordinary.

"There is naught to tell," he answered impatiently.

"Did you see her?"

"No."

"Then how do you know she was crazy?"

"So it was told me."

"Come, tell me all you learned, for the story of her unhappy state may have been devised to mislead any one like you, poor boy, who should be led to search her out. Nothing could be more simple, Medius," she asserted with encouraging confidence.

"So I thought for the moment, but those having her in charge were so painstaking in their statements, and so open and frank, that all who heard their story believed it implicitly."

"Did any one see the creature—this forlorn woman?"

"No, for the demented, as you know, are under the protection of the gods, and so screened from the eyes of the vulgar," he responded.

"Then no one saw her?"

"No, being of violent temper, she might not be lightly harassed by the curiously inclined."

"How do you know she was of violent temper?"

"I only know what they told me."

"Did she tear her hair—alarm the passers-by—with her outcries?" Theba persisted.

"'Twas not so recounted."

"Surely all violent people thus demean themselves!" she commented sarcastically.

"Yes," he responded, wearied and disheartened—"but had she been sane, she would have called aloud for aid," he added.

"Yes, unless she had been—poisoned—drugged."

"Cease thy conjurings, Pelopidas, you drive me mad," he cried, half-crazed.

"How did they screen her from the vulgar gaze,—this violent—crazy woman?" Theba went on, no way satisfied, her distrust now thoroughly aroused.

"Within a heavily curtained chair, as of necessity such a person must be confined when abroad."

"Who recounted all this,—these particulars of the demented being?" Theba asked with growing excitement.

"The bearers as they relieved each other in carrying the chair forward."

"Whither were they bent, and for what purpose,—did they tell that?"

"No, except that they were carrying her to a leech famed for his knowledge of things hidden from common men."

"And this leech, did they divulge his name?"



"Yes, and I remember 'twas foreign and curious, —Bogarus, or something like that, so the peasants understood it," he added.

"Did they give no hint of their destination?"

"No, and of the name I am not sure, as I say," Medius answered with more animation, his interest reawakened by the other's questioning.

"And you sought to follow her, you say?"

"Yes, but unavailingly, for on reaching the open country I lost all trace, as if the earth had swallowed her, and after groping about like a blind man, I came here, though not with any knowledge of the presence of the King."

"What object had you, then, in coming to Thebes?"

"None, save to wander on in despair, having no longer any purpose, and scarce knowing where my footsteps led me."

Reflecting for a long time on what Medius had said, she at last turned to him with an encouraging smile, exclaiming:

"In keeping the woman under cover, if she were not crazy 'tis plain they sought concealment and a hiding place; and where could they find that save in some great city like Thebes? Had they chosen Athens or Corinth they would have disembarked near those cities, but landing on our barren coast and making their way covertly into the interior, hiding at last all trace of the route they followed,

concealed some purpose, Medius, far different from what they claimed."

"What is there strange about it if she were indeed the crazy, forlorn creature they represented her to be?" he asked weakly.

"Had their mission been open and frank they would not have landed at an obscure spot, when there are safe harbours on the Boeotian coast, and well kept public roads open to all," she said convincingly.

"It may be as you say," he mused, his courage reviving.

"It cannot be otherwise."

"And you think the woman was brought here whether she were crazy or held a captive?"

"Yes, with many winding and misleading clues, it may be, but always with Thebes in view, the windings and evasions being to mislead any who might seek to follow."

"And if it should be Eurydice, and she be in Thebes, I am no nearer her than before, excluded as I am by the pending war and the city's towering walls!" he cried in despair.

Musing long on what he said, she at last exclaimed, smiling upon him:

"Yes, search in that direction is denied to you, but if it be that she lies concealed in the city, even though the gates be closed, there is yet a way to reach her," she confidently added.

"No! One's life were not worth a goat's horn who attempted it," he jeered, referring to an ancient bronze coin of no value.

"To those of alien birth that is true, but to one of her own people or a Boeotian peasant the Theban gates are always open," she sighed, thinking of her native city.

"What matters it, for there are none such within the King's camp, nor would they serve us faithfully if there were."

"There is one such, and all too faithful to Alexander's cause," she murmured, tears filling her eyes.

"There is one such you say?" Medius queried, incredulously.

"Yes, I, Pelopidas! Who abandoning my country have cast my lot with its enemies," she broke down, covering her face with her hands.

"You!" he rejoined, surprised. "Would you make the attempt?"

"Yes," she whispered, unable to say more.

"Though of Theban birth, they would deny you admittance, or, granting it, put you to death, knowing you to be in the King's train," he commented, regarding her with amazement.

"Yes, as I am, but garbed as a Boeotian peasant they would admit me without question, and having gained access to the city, I would be at liberty to pursue my search unmolested," she explained.

"Why do you speak of a thing so wild and im-

possible of execution, Pelopidas?" he said impatiently, scanning the youth's delicate form, arrayed now in Grecian costume, Theba having discarded her uniform and weapons as the army approached her native city.

"'Tis not impossible, Medius! And within the hour I will do as I say," she answered, defiantly, as if steeling her heart against the trying ordeal.

"No, you shall not, for penetrating your disguise they would throw you headlong from the walls," he objected, feeling she would be led to attempt what she said if not dissuaded.

"And rightly, too," she sorrowed.

"No, the King will not permit a thing so foolish, for there is no certainty that the Princess lies hidden in the city, or that you could effect her release should you find her there."

"That it was the Princess they concealed in the curtained chair I no longer doubt. Nor need you mourn if aught befalls me, nor blame yourself for my undoing, for I already meditated gaining admission to the city to hunt out my mother and bring her forth ere the town is stormed and the enraged soldiers put the inhabitants to the sword," she shuddered. "Nor must I put off my going lest the stroke fall and she be lost," Theba cried, springing to her feet and leading him to the door of the tent, dismissing him, adding: "Go seek the King and acquaint him with my errand, for it may be that he

may aid my escape from the city once my purpose is accomplished."

"I will go to him, but only that he may forbid the rash project," he answered as he hurried away.

"But ere you return, generous youth, I shall be within the Theban walls or lying dead beside them," she murmured.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THEBA ENTERS THE BELEAGUERED CITY

AFTER the departure of Medius, Theba hurriedly arrayed herself in the garb of a Bœotian peasant, a coarse linen tunic with shoes and leggings of untanned skins and a woollen cap adorned with the feather of a game cock, completing her disguise. Thus transformed and carrying a shepherd's crook, she stole from the Macedonian camp and made her way to one of the obscure gates of the city.

Speaking the Bœotian dialect with the fluency of a native, they quickly admitted her within the city, and this the more eagerly that they might question her regarding the doings of the King's army. Afterward, permitting her to go her way, she hastened with sorrowing heart along the well-known streets, now crowded with the excited inhabitants, every one intent upon the city's peril. All, it grieved her to see, were depressed in spirit as if some dreadful calamity threatened, but here and there from points of vantage, blatant demagogues loudly proclaimed the invincible strength of the Theban arms and the coming destruction of the besieging forces.

About the glowing forges of the armourers grimy artisans were busy shaping spears and other

weapons, and, most sorrowful sight of all, from the open doors of stately mansions, youths and old men were issuing, bearing antique arms of Agamemnon's time, now brought forth after the lapse of centuries for use against the common enemy. In the market-places and abundant pleasure-grounds of the wealthy metropolis, beneath the light of flaming torches, the greatest of the land were to be seen drilling in the ranks beside their slaves, fitting themselves with resolute courage for the coming struggle. About the sacred temples of the city multitudes of people were coming and going, offering up sacrifices and prayers to the god of Thebes, beseeching him to protect the city and render it strong against the hateful foe. All this amid the sobs of women and the cries of children who clung to the garments of their parents, little able to comprehend the meaning of the turmoil or foresee the dreadful hour when the gates should yield and the walls crumble before the onslaught of the King's enraged soldiers.

In the more unfrequented streets, and as if in mocking contrast, the soft air of night was filled with the odour of flowers, and from behind the vine-clad walls, fragrant with the perfume of roses, the whisperings of lovers and the soft notes of the lute broke upon her quickened ear. Breathing a fervent prayer as she hurried on, her face wet with tears, she at last approached her home, a stately

structure, standing apart and close against the wall of the besieged city.

Slackening her pace, a strange sight met her questioning eyes, for the massive gate that shut off the world from the wide enclosure in which the mansion stood, usually closed and barred, was now open and unguarded. Beyond, in the spacious gardens and in explanation of the seeming neglect, camp-fires burned, and about them clustered bodies of soldiers resting after the evening meal. Near the entrance in the glare of torches she beheld a body of spearsmen reclining in idle abandonment, their upright weapons fixed in the yielding turf. About another group javelins lay piled, while farther away bowmen and slingers—mere youths—rested on their arms.

On nearer approach and to her great surprise, she discovered the waiting soldiers to be attendants and retainers of her house, and among them trusted slaves, now set free and armed in defence of the endangered city. Her heart filled with pride at what she saw, she hurried on to the house, as if intent upon some errand, but entering found it silent and apparently deserted. Frightened at the stillness, she proceeded to her mother's room, but finding it empty threw herself upon a couch and burst into a flood of tears, no longer able to repress the anguish of her heart. Thus she lay grieving, until at last remembering her twofold errand and



the need there was for haste, she arose and resumed her disheartening search. Looking about the familiar spot, everything betokened her mother's recent presence, and encouraged by this she passed from room to room, until at last, reaching the topmost story, was surprised to discover the little used door leading to the roof open and unguarded. Ascending the dark and narrow stairs, she presently found herself on the broad roof, from which the camp-fires of the Macedonian army were clearly visible, lighting up the southern sky. Seeing them, her eyes grew soft with tender thoughts of the brave young King; but quickly recalling her mother's distressful plight and the fate of the waiting city, she chided herself for her divided love at an hour so fraught with peril to her people. Thus she stood when a voice she well remembered demanded with impatient speech.

"Know you not, my child, that coming here is forbidden to all, even the waiting soldiers, while the siege continues?"

Recognizing her mother's voice, Theba wheeled about, holding out her arms with imploring love and crying in a frenzy of passion:

"Mother! Mother! 'Tis I, Theba, your child whom you have thought lost to you forever!"

Brought face to face in this startling manner with her daughter, whom she had long thought dead, the surprised woman shook with supersti-

tious fear, believing the other to be an apparition sent from the other world on some errand of mercy to those within the stricken city. Too startled to respond to Theba's call, the latter cried out again:

"Mother! Mother! Why do you not speak to me! 'Tis Theba, your daughter."

Receiving no response, and frightened at the other's silence and blaming herself for her precipitancy, Theba plucked the cap from off her head clearly disclosing her features to the awestruck woman. Kneeling and grasping her mother's hands, she cried with choking sobs:

"Mother—mother, do you not know me—your child—whom you have thought dead—but now returns to comfort you in your affliction?"

Reassured, and recognizing the features of her lost child, the fond mother gave way to her surprise and joy, clasping Theba in her arms, overwhelmed by her great happiness. When at last her heart was stilled, she took Theba's face in her hands, and peering long and wistfully into her sorrowful eyes, asked:

"How does it happen, my darling, that you, whom I have so long thought lost to me forever, return in this unexpected manner and thus disguised?"

"Taken captive by Philip's victorious army, and borne thence into slavery, I now return, sheltered in my coming by Alexander's arms," Theba related

with hurried speech, ignoring the particulars of her life in Macedonia.

"How happens it that the hateful King thus favours you?" the other questioned with some restraint.

"Because of my people."

"What of them?" the other coldly interrogated.

"When it was made known to Alexander that I was of the family of Pelopidas, with whom the kings of Macedonia long ago contracted ties of friendship, he could not honour me enough."

"Thus he repays the favour shown his father by attacking the city that sheltered him when in exile," she said with sorrowing speech, looking away to the Macedonian camp, her heart torn with anguish over the unhappy fate that threatened her beloved country.

"He has not attacked the city, but waited—and still waits," Theba pleaded.

"For our submission?"

"Yes, if you will use so cruel a word."

"This submission he will never receive, though the walls crumble and not one survives to tell of it!" she sternly asserted.

"Surely the unthinking multitude should not be thus cruelly sacrificed?"

"Better they die thus than serve a foreign master. But tell me of yourself and how it is that you are here," she questioned, her mood changing.

"It is all due to the kind intercession of her I love—she whom I served as a slave."

"And did this person you love protect and save you from a life of—degradation?" the other asked with hesitating speech.

"Yes, for she was more a sister than a mistress, and my slavery was such sweet enthrallment that I came to cherish her who held me in bondage as if she were my other self."

"Tell me of her—of this woman who was kind to my enslaved child," the other questioned, her eyes bedimmed with tears, embracing Theba.

"'Twas the Princess Eurydice of the royal house—she who, meeting a fate more unhappy than mine, we now mourn as one lost forever," Theba sighed.

"What fate could be more pitiable than that of slavery?" her mother inquired, surprised.

"That which has befallen the Princess Eurydice, but the particulars of which we are still ignorant. And in that is our sorrow, mother, for did we know her to be dead our grief would find comfort of life with the passing days; but now, being in ignorance, all is horror and unending regret."

"Tell me her misfortune for which you grieve, my child, for my love goes out to this unknown one in remembrance of her kindness to you, as if she were one long treasured in my heart."

"There is not much to tell, only this, that worn with sorrowing over the absence of Medius, her

lover, and being threatened with a distasteful union by the Queen, the Princess sought to gain some cheerfulness of spirit apart from the hateful companionship of Olympias, and so was wont to find rest and quietude in daily excursions on the river Lydias. But one day while thus engaged, thinking no harm threatened, her barge was suddenly attacked by unknown miscreants, and all who accompanied her put to death," Theba related, shuddering at the recollection.

"What was the Princess' fate?"

"That we do not know. At first I thought it a cunning plot of the Queen to hide her away until such time as she could force her to wed Lyncestes, the craven who seeks her hand."

"You say at first?"

"Yes."

"But now?"

"I know not what to think, for Medius, half crazed, searching the country far and near, finds no trace of his love—unless it be," Theba went on, recalling a part of her errand in visiting the city—"unless it be that such clue was found on the coast of Bœotia," whereupon she recounted all that Medius had told her concerning the landing of the distraught woman, and the mysterious journeyings that followed.

"'Twas most strange, for few save outlaws land on our bleak northern coast, and so it might have

been the Princess, as you suspect; but did he gain no hint of their final destination?"

"Nothing save the name of the leech they sought, and that imperfectly, and given out, it may be, only to further conceal their purpose."

"What was his name, if you remember, child, for there are few in Thebes who dare intervene between the mentally unbalanced and the gods who watch over them?"

"'Twas unusual and of foreign origin, Medius thought," Theba said, striving to remember the name.

"Try to recall it, dear," her mother urged, "for there is no one of prominence in all Bœotia of whom I do not know."

"The name, as Medius recalls it, was Bogarus, but—"

"Bogarus! Art sure?" the other cried, unable to await Theba's further speech.

"So he believes."

"Bogarus! The miscreant! Despised of men and gods!" the other exclaimed, communing with her own thoughts.

"Know you this man, if it be he?"

"Yes, and that 'tis the same there can be no manner of doubt."

"And his hiding place?"

"Yes, child," and dragging Theba to the edge of the roof she pointed to a dark and gloomy building

in the adjoining yard, exclaiming, "there, child, is the home of the sordid wretch."

"Yonder!" Theba gasped, pointing to the forbidding structure, unable to say more.

"Yes."

"What is he—the monster!"

"A purveyor of crime, who practices his calling under the guise of medicine—a being hated and feared by all Thebes."

Overwhelmed by the other's disclosure at a moment when she believed Eurydice forever lost to those who loved her, Theba gazed with staring eyes at the forbidding structure her mother had pointed out. At last, holding out her hands, she sobbed:

"What if in truth she be imprisoned there, heart-broken, a prey to bitter anguish, waiting in deadly fear the coming of Lyncestes!" she choked.

"If it be that Bogarus holds her thus in bondage, fear nothing, child, for I will have her brought forth into the light of day ere a half hour passes," her mother exclaimed with the energy the great Pelopidas had been wont to show.

"How can you do this, mother, when the city is governed by such artfully contrived laws, that every form of crime is possible, nay actually occurs under cover of private right, as you well know?" Theba questioned, recalling to mind the government's prolix methods and devious practices.

"So it is in times of peace and quietness, but now the strong again rule, thanks to the gods and Alexander's presence; and so I have but to tell my wish to yonder waiting men and standing still watch them burst the barred doors and bring to light every secret Bogarus seeks to hide," she cried, looking down on the soldiers who rested in the garden below.

"Then lose not a moment, for that the Princess is dead or a prisoner in Bogarus' house there can be no doubt," and grasping her mother's hand they hurriedly descended to the entrance of the mansion. Sending for the officer in charge of the waiting soldiers, Theba's mother told him of her suspicions and what she required.

"Place a secure guard about Bogarus' house; stop every egress," she commanded, "and when you have done this, ask admittance, and if denied, break down the door, threatening him with death if any one within is molested or harmed in any way."

Greatly pleased at the nature of his duty, for Bogarus had long been under the suspicion of the officer, he hurried away to do as she directed. Watching from the portico of the mansion, Theba and her mother saw him collect his soldiers, and they obeying with the alacrity of children, the house of Bogarus was quickly surrounded and summons made for admission, as the officer had been told.



Affrighted at the untimely visit, Bogarus, cursing and screaming, bade them begone, at which the waiting soldiers, not stopping to argue, charged headlong against the door with the oaken beam they had ready at hand. Crushing the obstruction at a blow, the officer and those about him rushed into the dark and sombre building, calling upon the leech to show himself lest death be his portion. Waiting, Theba and her mother scarce breathed, so great was their anxiety and terror, but while they listened with strained ears for some frightened cry, the soldiers suddenly emerged from the gloomy structure, supporting the half-fainting form of Eurydice. Nor could there be mistake, for her features showed distinct in the light of the flaming torches held aloft by the excited soldiers, who swarmed about the entrance. Calling her name, Theba hastened to the side of the trembling woman, exclaiming as she clasped Eurydice in her arms and covered her face with kisses:

"You have nothing more to fear, poor child, for friends have come to save you."

Recognizing her as the page Pelopidas, notwithstanding her disguise, Eurydice clasped her about the neck, sobbing out her happiness at the unexpected deliverance. Leading the weak and stricken woman to her home, Theba uttered no word save to tell of Medius' presence and love and his long and despairing search.



THE RESCUE

44

Thus strangely and unexpectedly was Eurydice restored to her friends, and when the night waned, and she had overcome her fright and had recounted her strange adventures; Theba besought her mother to go with them to the King's camp. But to this she would not consent, the proud matron sternly refusing the protection of Alexander's arms, nor could she be persuaded to seek a place of safety elsewhere.

"You must go with us, mother," Theba insisted in despair, "for the city will be stormed, and every outrage conceivable, it may be, practised by the soldiery under cover of the confusion."

"No, I will perish with my people rather than seek safety with the enemies of my country," the haughty woman declared, holding high her head.

"'Tis a useless sacrifice, mother, and going you may influence the King to greater leniency, for he holds in sacred remembrance the ties of friendship with our house, incurred by Philip, his father," Theba urged, with tears.

"I care not for myself, child. Losing my husband at Philip's hands, life lost all its sweetness, and now that I know you live and in happiness I will welcome death with gladness," she mourned.

But while fixed in her determination to perish if need be with the city, she besought Theba and Eurydice to hasten their departure, lest the authorities, hearing of Theba's presence, should seize her

person and put her to death. And in this emergency, it being impossible to secure egress by the gates of the city without exciting suspicion and arrest, the little group ascended to the roof of the mansion, from which point of vantage the attendant soldiers lowered Theba and Eurydice from the protecting wall to the ground below. Unharméd, they hastened with all speed, reaching the protection of the King's troops in the gray of the morning. Seeking the Monarch's presence they found him astir, giving directions to his officers or patiently listening to the reports brought him. Waiting until there was a momentary pause Theba entered with the lost Princess, and evading the King's many expressions of surprise and gratitude, she told him of her mother's distressful plight, beseeching him in the event the city was stormed to take measures for her complete protection. This he promised to do with many assurances of his grateful love, upon which, worn with the night's adventure, she excused herself to seek the seclusion of her tent.

Overjoyed at the unexpected recovery of Eurydice, the King directed that Medius be sent for, and, the news being quickly spread abroad in the camp, the eventful hour was given over to rejoicing at her surprising deliverance.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THEBA'S AWAKENING

ANXIOUS above all things to come to an amicable understanding with the Thebans, Alexander loitered aimlessly beneath the walls of the city. In this situation, the attack was finally precipitated by his enraged soldiers, who excited to the highest pitch by the revilings of the Thebans and the harassment to which they were subjected, took advantage of an opening in their front to boldly attack the enemy. Whereupon their companions rushed forward to their support and thus in a moment and contrary to the King's express command, the battle was precipitated; and the Macedonians being superior to the Thebans, as regards numbers and discipline, the stronghold was taken after a prolonged and desperate struggle.

In the assault on the beleaguered city, Alexander fought with the common soldiers, leading and directing the battle wherever his presence was needed. While thus engaged with a superior force of the enemy, the column he momentarily led and encouraged by his presence was fiercely assailed on its flank by a body of Theban cavalry who suddenly emerged from a hidden postern near at hand. Facing this new attack, the King fought hand to

hand in the unequal struggle, until the greater number of those he led were killed or wounded in the strife. Observing this, and seeing him unsupported in the midst of the melee, the enemy, hurling their javelins amid deafening cries, rushed on afresh and with renewed hope, charging in a body directly upon the person of the King. While he was thus savagely beset, a Boeotian soldier, edging in with uplifted weapon, sought to strike the Monarch from behind. Seeing his great danger, Theba, who had kept near the object of her idolatry, uttered a cry, and spurring between the King and his assailant received the stroke with crushing force full upon her unprotected head. Stunned by the blow, she fell headlong to the ground, a prayer for the King's safety on her lips. At this moment of supreme peril, when Alexander fought for his life, assailed on every side, a body of the Companions, seeking a way, came swiftly on, and observing the King's danger fell like a whirlwind on the Theban soldiers, putting them to instant rout.

When the attack had been beaten off, and there was a moment's lull in the strife, the King, observing Theba's horse wandering riderless on the field, alarmed for her safety, caused instant search to be made for his favourite page. Whereupon, an officer who had observed her action told him of the mishap and how it came about. Stirred to the heart, the King spurred to the spot, where he found her body

outstretched amid the dead and dying, her hair matted with blood from the gaping wound she had received. Springing from his horse, the fire died out of his eyes and a groan of anguish escaped him, when, on lifting her up, he found life extinct. Pressing his lips to her pallid brow he gave her into the arms of Jaron the leech, and sorrowing as for the loss of a brother, reluctantly mounted his horse and plunged afresh into the battle, which still raged with unabated fury about the Theban walls.

Making a hurried examination of the wound of the stricken page, Jaron discovered to his great joy that her heart still beat, whereupon, applying such restoratives as he had at hand, he wrapped her in his cloak and bore her to the Kadmea, which was now open to the King's troops. Dispatching word of what had happened, to Eurydice, the gentle Princess, in sore distress, quickly made her appearance to aid the leech in his loving ministrations.

Hurriedly apprising her of Theba's double life, a cry of sorrow burst from the lips of the Princess as she looked down on her former bondsmaid, and reflected on the sorrows of the poor wanderer and the cause of her unhappy strivings.

"Still your cries," Jaron reprimanded, "and of her secret not a word! 'Tis hers, not ours, and of its purport, no whisper must reach the tattling world!"



ever believed that the hand of some malignant deity directed the blow she received at Cheronea."

"Why should he think that?"

"It is his belief that the stroke somehow gave false direction to her thoughts on her awakening to consciousness; took from her thereafter the power of will she before possessed," Eurydice sighed, recalling the maid's many strange acts.

"What is that you say—that her mind was perverted by the blow that struck her down at Cheronea?" Jaron sharply questioned, as if it might explain something strange and unnatural that had long perplexed him.

"So he believes; and to it he ascribes the uncontrollable passion of her life, and the restraint that governs her thoughts and acts, unaccountable in a free agent."

"What delusion? What restraint?" the leech demanded, deeply interested.

"Loving her to the utter undoing of his heart and mind, and all despairingly, Demetrius yet often pleaded his cause, unable to withhold the expression of his deep devotion. She, looking with gentle compassion on his unhappy state, would reply that her heart oftentimes inclined with tenderness toward him, but when the budding hope of love seemed about to blossom in her breast, straightway it was frozen up as if her mind were somehow held

in bondage by another," Eurydice explained, watching the shadows that came and went on Jaron's face.

"If this strange restraint with its attendant delusion came from a bruised brain, the second stroke, reopening the old wound, may cure it, for such things have repeatedly happened and are of record and known to every leech—But," he hurried on, seeing Eurydice's face light up with hope, "more often it leaves the mind as before, or, indeed, without reason or thought of any kind."

"Oh gentle, gracious gods, grant that the poor child's reason may be restored, and no further enslavement of mind cloud her young life," Eurydice prayed.

"If it happened that some imaginative particle of the brain was perverted by the stroke received at Cheronea it might have followed that the first object her eyes rested upon on awakening to consciousness became the fixed idea of her life; and this would have occurred if it had been an animal instead of—Alexander," he hesitated. "Thus it might have been with her, and the first object she saw on awakening, became thereafter the incorporated world to her perverted vision. If that was what happened," he went on conclusively, "the present shock, readjusting the particles of the brain, may leave her mind free as before, for such instances as I say are well-known to men of science."

"Let us implore the gods of her country that it may be so in her case," Eurydice prayed, falling on her knees beside the couch.

Stilling her words, Jaron bent anew over the prostrate form, for unnoticed by them the stricken maid had emerged from the stupor that possessed her, and now gazed with wondering eyes into the face of Eurydice. Motionless, they waited and watched, no sound disturbing the deep quiet of the chamber. Would reason resume its gentle sway with returning consciousness; or, the brain deprived as before of its just office, halt midway, confused by a strange and unaccountable delusion? Or, more grievous still, would the mind, succumbing wholly to the added shock lose itself forever in the blackness of mental death? Such were the thoughts of those who waited in agonizing suspense beside the couch, the minutes lengthening into hours as they listened with breathless eagerness for the first word of the reviving maid. Thus they stood, bending over her, when Theba, looking with questioning eyes into the face of the sorrowing Princess, murmured:

"Eurydice!"

"Yes, child, 'tis I, Eurydice, who loves you," the Princess soothed, striving to smile through her tears.

"I feared it might be a dream," Theba whispered wearily.

"No, 'tis real; and here is Jaron who will cure your hurt and nurse you back to life as at Edessa," Eurydice comforted.

"How did it happen that I was wounded, for I took no part in the savage strife?" Theba sighed, trying to recall the circumstances of her injury.

"'Twas while striving to save the King from a blow that threatened his life," Eurydice explained.

"Did I fail—and the King fall?" she murmured after a while, as if loth to ask the question.

"No, for the blow that was intended for him fell upon your head instead, poor child."

"I remember that I rode near him."

"Yes, dear."

"But took no part, and went to the field without weapons or defensive armour."

"Yes, and most unhappily as regards the last."

"Did the King escape—unharméd?" she questioned, looking about her questioningly.

"Yes, without hurt, but quitting the battle when you fell, dismounted and taking you in his arms, gave you into my care," Jaron explained.

"Did he do that?" she questioned but inattentively, scanning the room as if in search of some object.

"Yes, and thinking you dead, shed tears over your unhappy fate," Jaron answered, glancing at Eurydice, who stood with clouded face, grieving over Theba's continued reference to the King. <sup>28</sup>

Striving to lift herself, Theba suddenly cried out in agony of terror, as if fearing that what she saw and heard might be only a delusion of the brain:

"Jaron! Jaron! say that I am not dead—that this is real—that I am not dreaming!"

"Yes, you live, and in a little while will have back your strength, for the Princess will nurse you again to life as once before," he soothed.

"She is kindness itself, and I owe all my happiness to her indulgence," Theba said, striving to reach the Princess' hand.

"You owe me nothing, child. 'Tis I and mine who are in your debt beyond the hope of paying, or thought of anything so vain," Eurydice petted, as she bent over and buried her tear-stained face beside that of Theba's.

Caressing the hair of the Princess, Theba presently inquired, a sigh escaping her:

"How did the battle end—with my people holding fast the gates of the city?"

"No, the victory mainly rested with the King's troops," Jaron answered vaguely.

"Was my mother rescued, for so the King promised if the city fell?" she asked with feverish eagerness, recalling her mother's peril.

"Yes, and no way harmed," Jaron assured her, yet ignorant of what he averred so confidently, for the echoes of the strife, as it receded into the doomed city, could still be faintly heard.

Sighing her relief, Theba remained quiet, but strangely alert and watchful, listening as if expectant of some event, the putting off of which she could not understand. Raising her head, she looked about her, and seeing no one save Eurydice and the leech, made as if she would speak, a deep blush overspreading her hitherto pallid face. Beholding her agitation, they remained silent, conscious her words would quickly disclose that for which they waited with such agonizing suspense. Would the reopened wound heal, leaving undisturbed the delusion of the past; or, with the mind unclouded, freed from the bondage that had so long held it in thrall? Theba seemingly disappointed in her search, and unobservant of their anxious watching, remained silent, her eyes fixed with feverish intensity on the closed door. At last, apparently unable to restrain her impatience longer, she reached out her hands, saying with pitiful weakness:

"And—the pages, Eurydice—my companions?"

"Yes, dearest."

"Did—did any fall?" she whispered.

"Yes, some more forward than their duty called."

"The bravest?" she choked.

"It may be."

"It may be!" Theba screamed. "Why do you not speak out? Why do you torture me?" she sobbed, her face pale as death.

"What is it we keep from you, child?" Eurydice soothed.

"Demetrius! What was his fate? Did he fall? Is he dead—that he is not here? Or is it that he no longer loves me?" she cried in a paroxysm of tears, hiding her face in her hands.

Made happy by what they heard and saw, all their apprehensions quieted, Jaron motioned Eurydice to bring Demetrius, and he, being indeed at the door, came on the instant and running to Theba's side, fell on his knees beside her crying:

"Theba! Theba! My love!"

Hearing him, she lay still, trembling, looking into his eyes, but presently overcoming her emotion and smiling upon him through her tears, she reached out her arms and drew him to her, kissing him on the mouth, whispering:

"I love you."

Thus it was that they were at last united, and she with no enslavement of the mind to hold her love in check.

Overjoyed at the happy ending, Jaron emerged from the obscurity of the chamber whence he had taken himself, and whispering to Demetrius, bade him withdraw lest Theba's deep excitement should bring on a fever, and so hinder her quick recovery. And when the happy lover was at last made to obey, he darkened the room, and gave directions that no one save Eurydice should be admitted to



THE CONSUMMATION





the sick chamber till the crisis had passed. But when a week had gone by in this way and Theba had somewhat regained her strength, the King begged that he might be admitted to her presence ere he set out for Corinth to renew the convention previously entered into with the Grecian cities; and his desire being gratified, he entered the sick room, and kissing the prostrate maid, said:

"I owe it to you that I am here, sweet cousin, and morning and night have prayed the gods that you might not have given your life in exchange for mine."

"Seeing the impending blow, I thought to divert the stroke, oh King, but coming from my own people I could do no more," she sorrowed, thinking of the stricken city.

"Nor would I have had you lift your arm to aid my cause had your heart inclined. It were favour enough that you intervened to save my life," he added fervently, lifting her hand to his lips.

"Then I did you a service, oh King?" she whispered.

"Yes, cousin, and such a one as carries with it a debt kings no more than peasants can repay."

"Would you wish to repay it if you could, and yet do yourself a favour in the striving?" she asked, a deep blush overspreading her face.

"Yes, in all ways possible, yet knowing that I could do only a part," he smiled.

"Then I pray you treasure Demetrius in your heart, for he of all men is the most noble and most worthy of your favour. To him I owe a debt of love and gratitude, oh King, of which you do not know, and that a life is all too short to pay and so it is that I crave for him your gentle favour," she hurried on, gazing into his face with eager eyes.

Looking down on her and smiling, the King said:

"I thought, sweet cousin, you would have craved a kindness at my hands, but what you ask so conforms to all my inclinations that 'tis no favour at all. But I will remember it none the less, and my love for him, needing no guidance, shall have such savour of truth that all the world shall see and comment upon it."

Thus they parted and if the King ever suspected the cause that led Theba to assume a dual life, he gave no sign. But the army and the world saw nothing more of Pelopidas and in place of the attractive page, Theba appeared as the wife of Demetrius and that great Prince—for so he in time became—mindful of the treasure he had won, continued to love and cherish her all her days.

Thus Theba and Eurydice were at last happy in their love, and the King not less in the re-establishment of Macedonia's power, leaving him free to pursue the conquest of Persia and the quest of the

Princess Roxana, who had won his heart when a Prince, but of which happening the world at large knew nothing.



**THE END**



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